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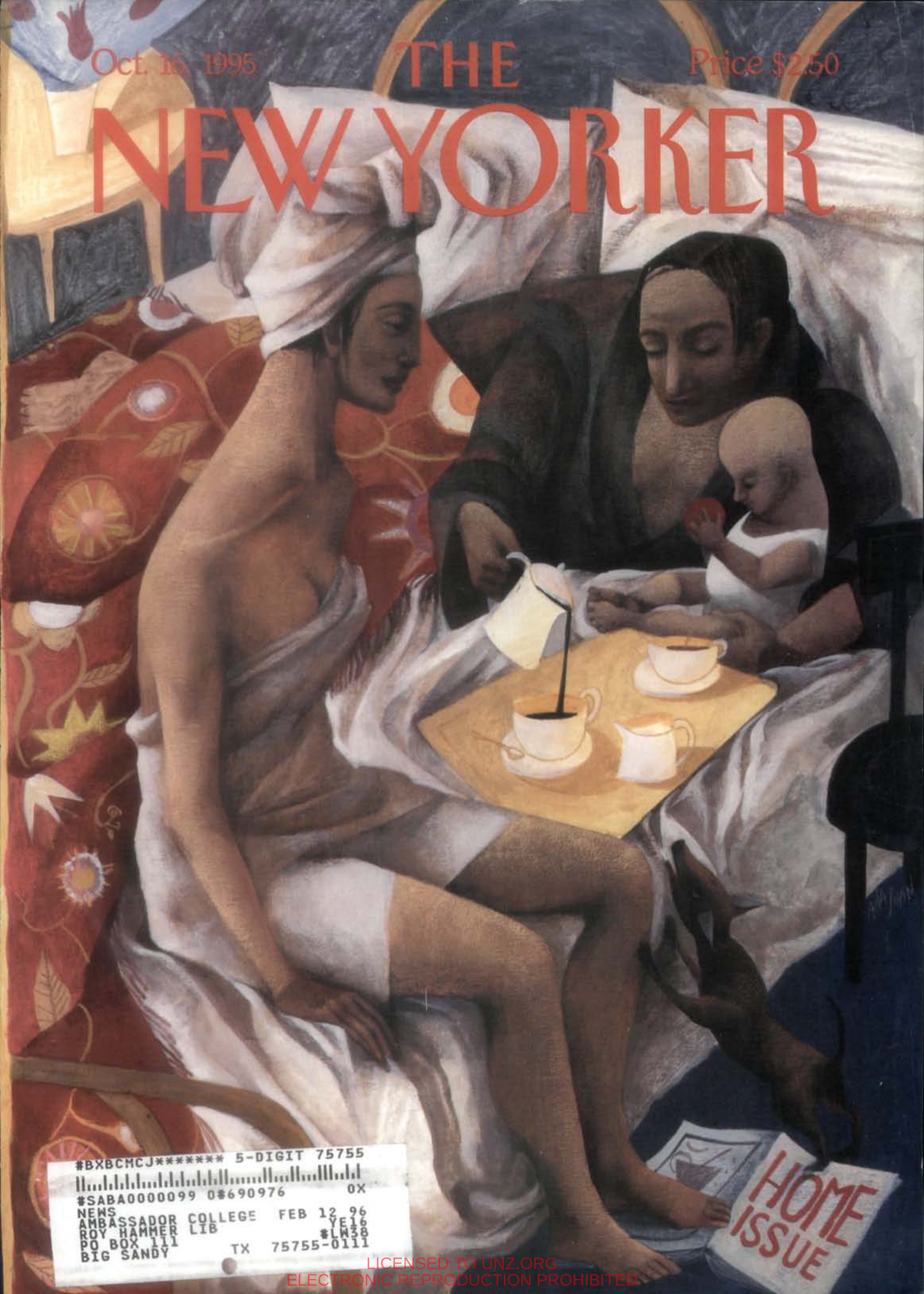
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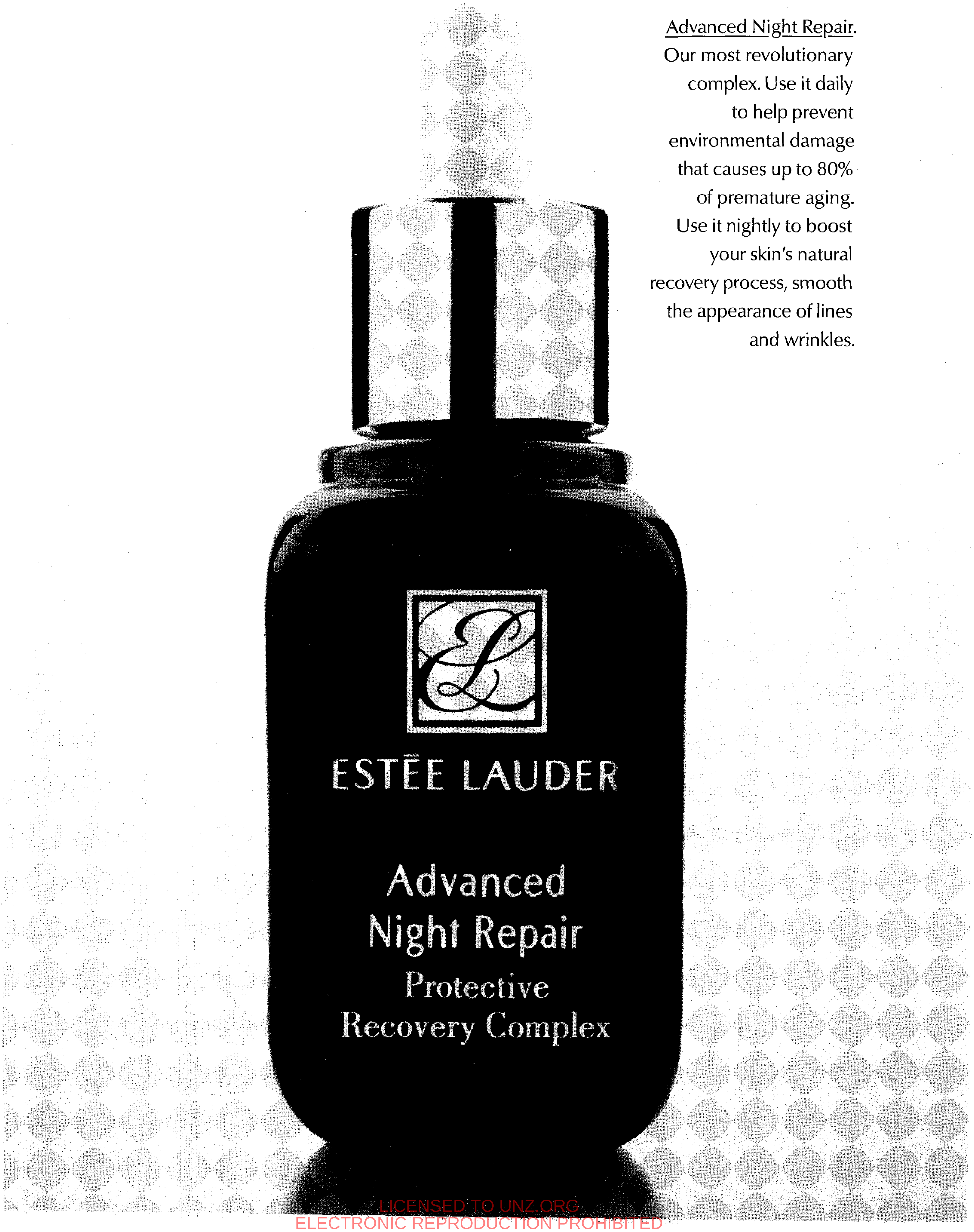
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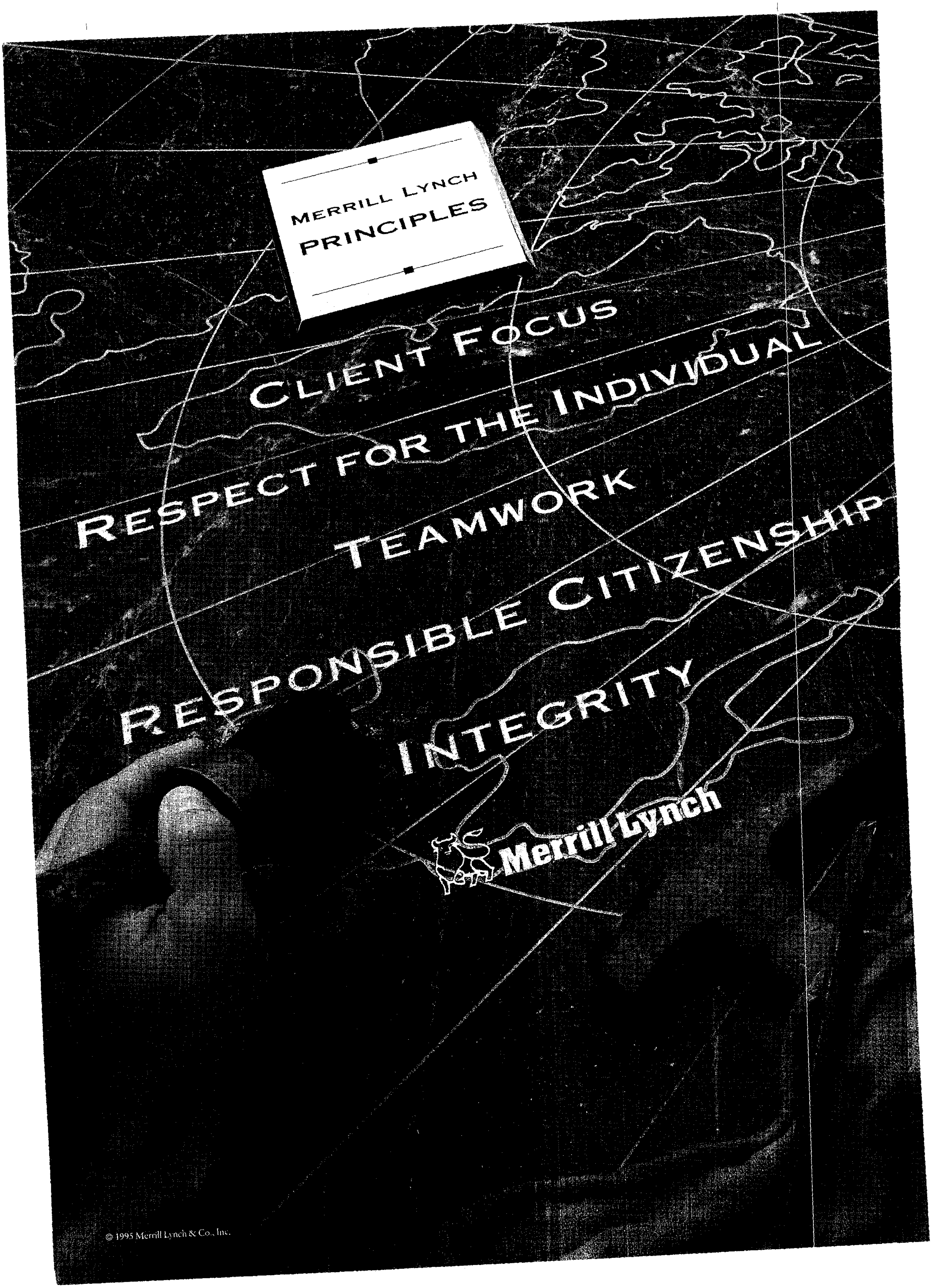
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THE NEW YORKER
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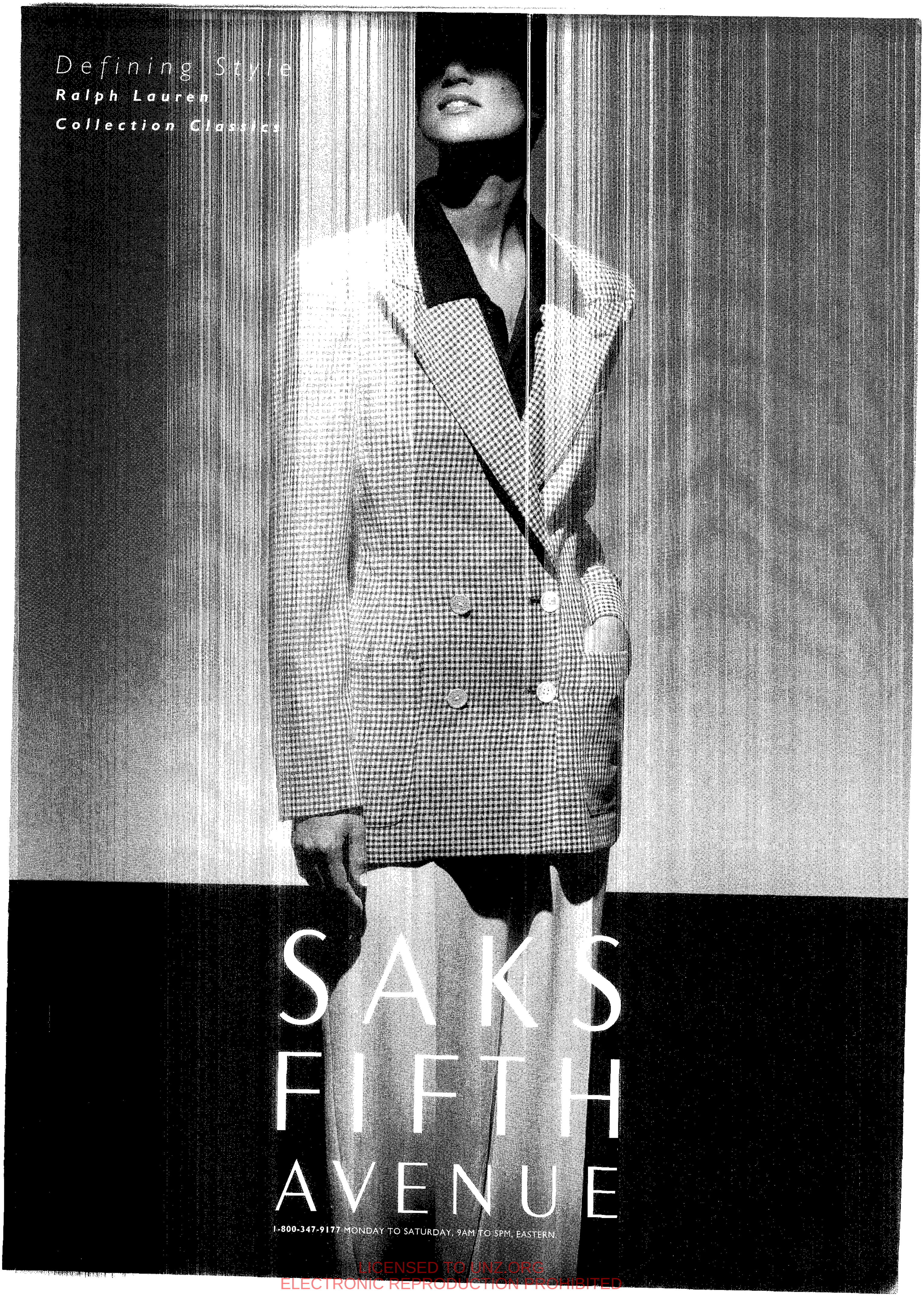

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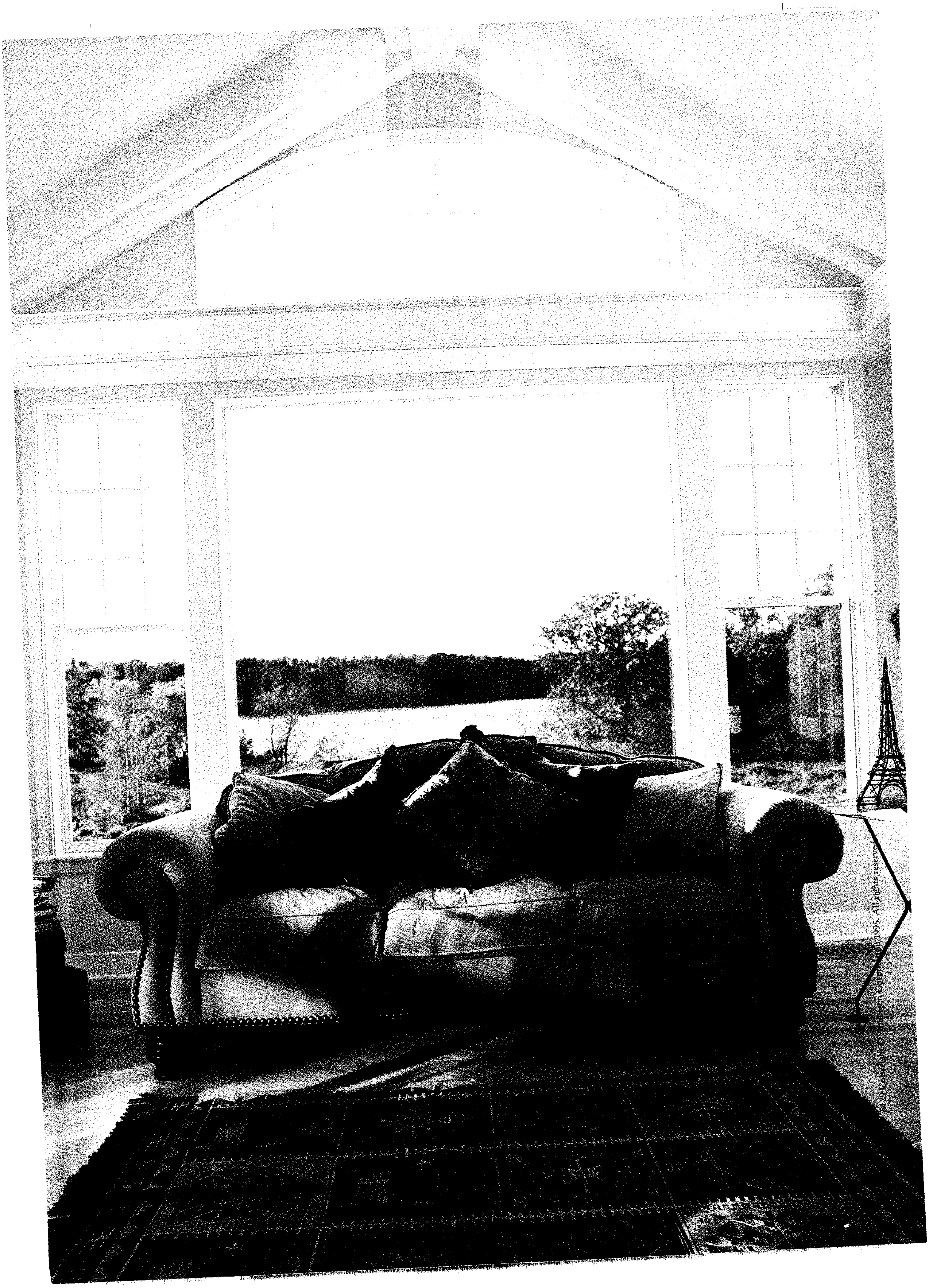

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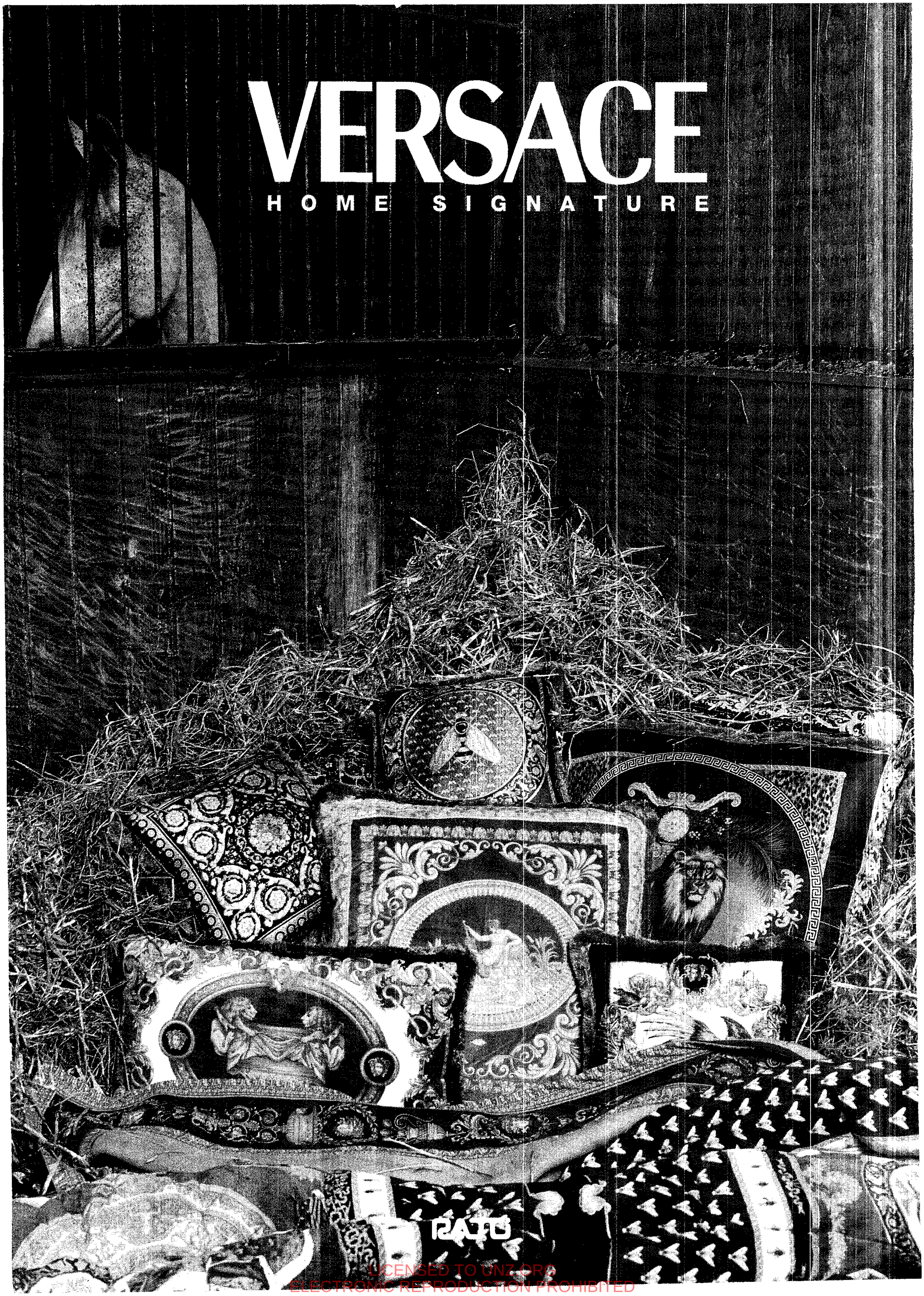

VERSACE
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COMMENT

MORE THAN A HOUSE

The idea we live in.

MANY years ago, a trashy American poet named Edgar A. Guest wrote a poem that included the line "It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home." The poem was printed, reprinted, and paraphrased in many different forms; framed, it held a place of honor in thousands of living rooms. It earned this place of honor by pointing awkwardly at a truth hardly expressible in terms worthy of it. Robert Frost, a poet not often mentioned in the same breath as Guest, has come closer to making clear the distinction between house and home. In "The Death of the Hired Man" Frost describes a farm couple faced with an unexpected problem. An old hired man whom the husband has discharged returns in obvious physical and mental distress. He has become one of those who are now called (the term draws its chill from the warmth of its root) the homeless. He wants his job back, and, out of pride, he tells the farmer's wife of his grand plans for the ditching of a meadow and the clearing of an upland pasture—tasks he often promised to accomplish and always, and characteristically, failed to get around to. Pleading his cause, the wife says, "Warren, he has come home to die." The husband mockingly replies, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, / They have to take you in." Upon which the wife says at once, "I should have called it / Something you somehow haven't to deserve." That simple, forgiving negative sums up the prodigious difference in meaning between house and home, between a measurable physical object and a principle, created not out of bricks or wood but out of a variety of emotions accumulated over time and having little to do with reason, still less with rewards and punishments. Home is a metaphor infinitely capacious; in Ecclesiastes it stands comfortingly for death ("man goeth to his long home") and in Thucydides for everlasting fame after death ("a home in the minds of men"). Few languages offer as many ready alternatives to "house" as English does—think of "residence," "abode," "dwelling," "domicile," "cottage," and the like, and of such useful metonyms as "hearth," "fireside," "rooftree," and "shelter"—but none of them have the power to move us as profoundly as

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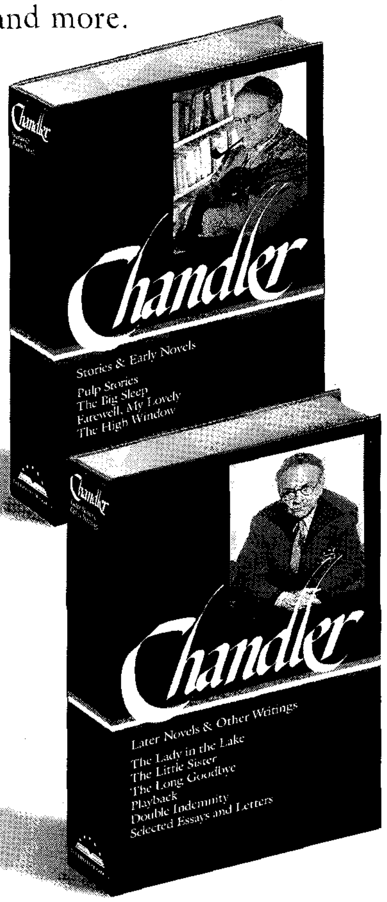

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"home." No wonder several of our Presidents have complained that the White House never quite becomes home: its grandeur can never be domesticated.

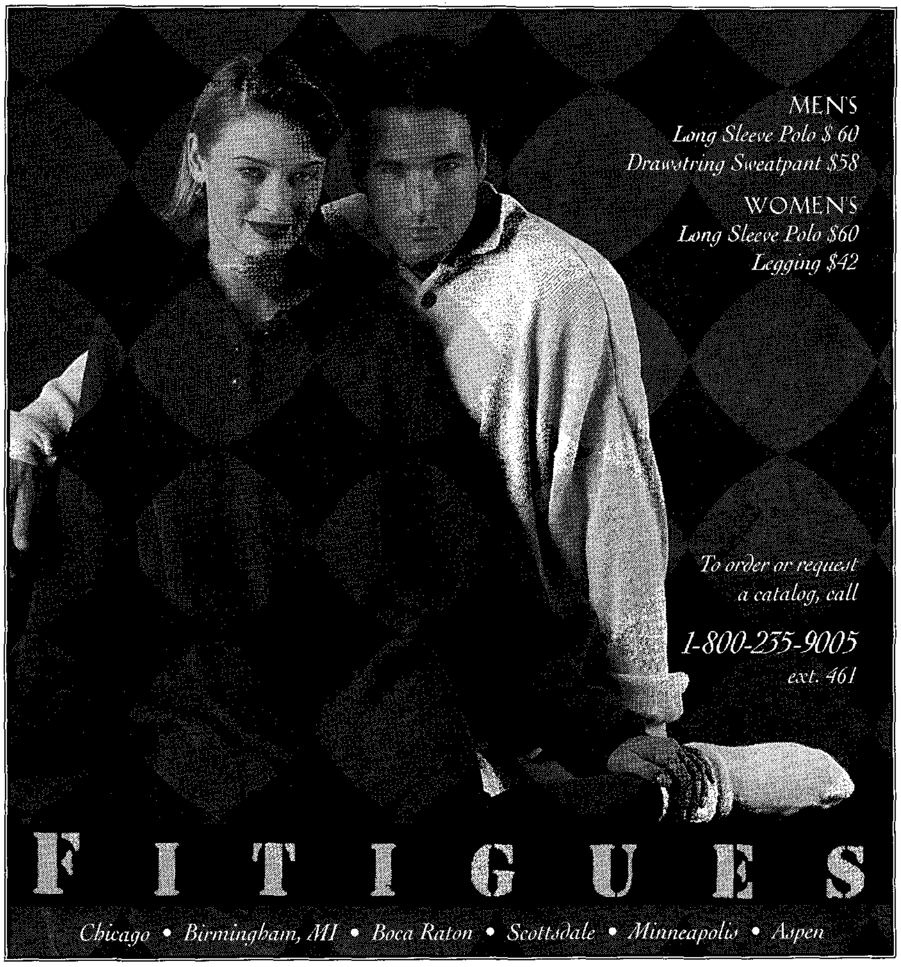
So precious to us is "home" that, like other precious things, the word is constantly subject to the corruption of commercial misuse. One does well to fear a restaurant that boasts of "home cooking," and if ever there was a home that one felt reluctant to enter because it was so utterly unhomelike it is a funeral home. Nevertheless, we have to guard against our own suggestibility: making "home" stand for so much that is good in life turns it into a goal that thousands of manufacturers of domestic appliances are eager to exploit. In advertising terms, "home" equals "buy." If we Americans are tireless self-improvers, we are also tireless consumers, readily tempted to suppose that if only we buy the right garden hose, the right vacuum cleaner, the right automatic overhead garage-door opener we will surely have created home, sweet home. The so-called shelter magazines woo us with the idea of shelter not so much for ourselves as for the possessions that we are encouraged to share habitable space with. Nowadays, architects provide in their plans for new houses what they call a "family room"—"living room" has become as great a nomenclatural no-no as "parlor"—but the family itself is often hard-pressed to defend its territorial rights against the intrusion of objects that it has found itself unable to resist. The willingness to become a couch potato may depend upon finding an area big enough to contain a couch, especially as TV sets approach the size of Steinways and even the once modestly scaled telephone is replaced by a combined telephone, message keeper, intercom, computer printer, and fax machine. A typical ad will show a family in the family room winsomely going ga-ga over some new toy that the advertiser claims is indispensable to bliss: the toy might be a chemical spray that will remove wine stains from carpets at a single swipe, or a burglar-alarm system whose sensors can detect the motions of a mouse in labor.

But wait. Acquiring so many visible symbols of domestic contentment can be hazardous. To our dismay, we soon discover how close a house we own can come to owning us. Emerson said, "Things are in the saddle, / and ride mankind," and in roughly the same fashion the things that fill a house from cellar to attic can tyrannize its occupants. We are enslaved not only in respect to mortgages, property taxes, and utility charges but also in respect to the innumerable tyrant-things that have it in them to break, or break down, or get lost, or lose their lustre, or grow too greatly cherished.

The strain of being at the beck and call of possessions isn't easy to bear. Gratefully, we remind ourselves that the word "home" is strong enough to survive almost any degree of profitmaking defilement. Not that there aren't times when excellent use is made of the word for purposes no less worthy because they happen to make money for someone. Booksellers know that "home" enhances any title that contains it. Innumerable novels have been written with "house" in their titles ("The House of the Seven Gables," "The Trouble of One House," "The House of Mirth"), but none of them are so enviably charged with emotion as, say, the title that Susan Cheever gave to her memoir of her father: "Home Before Dark." The three words reverberate in our minds; reading them, savoring them by speaking them aloud, we feel, not for the first time, our ancient fear of the night, our primordial longing to reach our journey's end before the light fails. "Safe home," we say to parting guests; it is a blessing centuries old, which will help to carry them without misadventure through a countryside riddled with our contemporary equivalents of brigands and dragons.

In Frost's poem, the wife's defense of the hired man comes too late: yielding to her pleadings, the husband goes in search of him and finds him dead. But he has died, the unreliable, victorious old scamp, just where he wanted to be—in the only home that mattered to him. For most of us, home is the place where the unobtrusive, daily victories we achieve are all the more satisfying for going unremarked. They are on a small scale and concern not life and death but a hundred pleasures of body and mind that daily flood in all around us (like woodsmoke, or birdsong, or the voices of children) and make us, in our houses that are more than houses, happy.

—BRENDAN GILL



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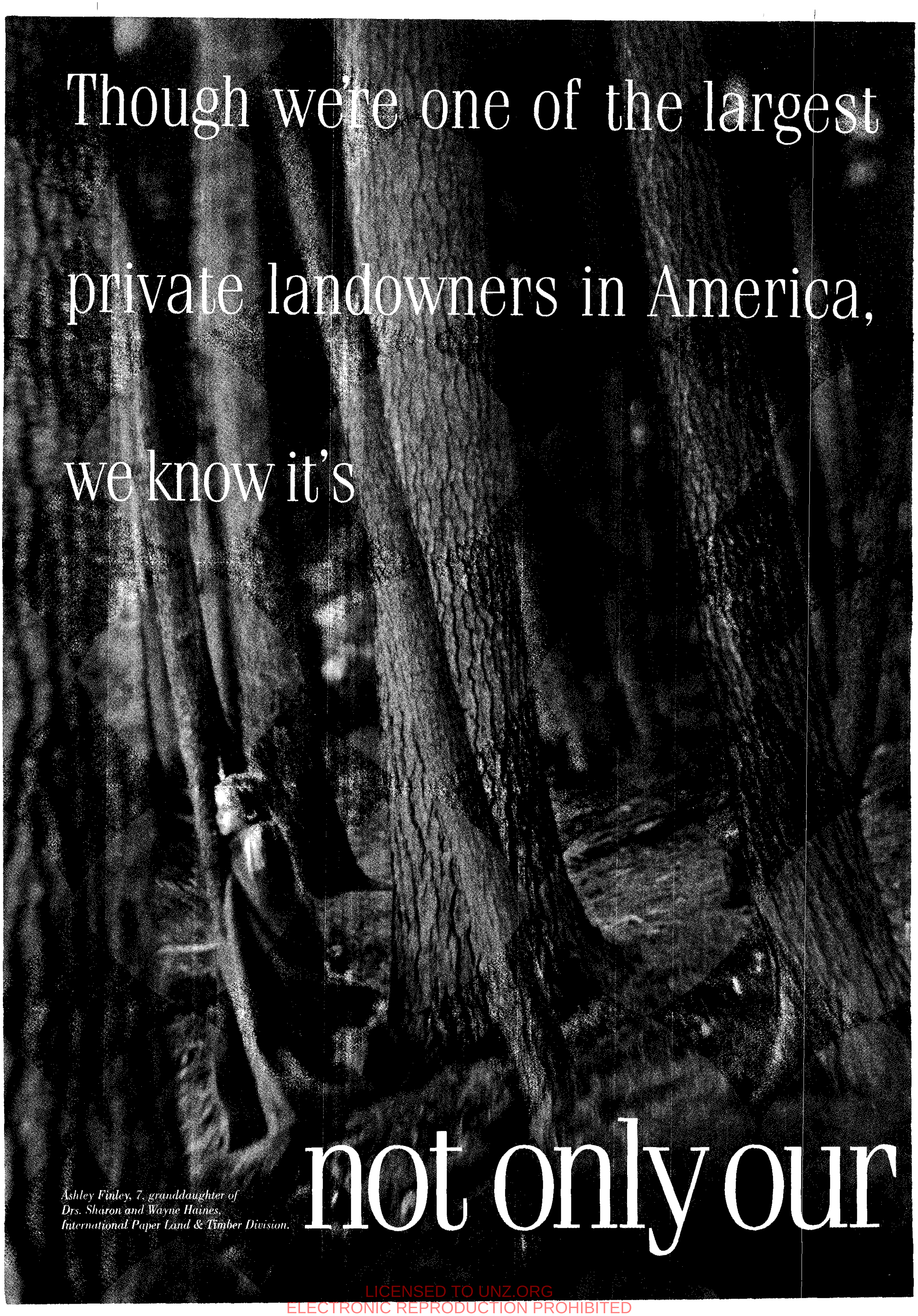
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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Dangerous Corner—David Mamet directs the Atlantic Theatre Company's production of J. B. Priestley's 1932 mystery. Opens Oct. 11 at 8. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Full Gallop—Manhattan Theatre Club's season opener examines the later career of the fashion editor Diana Vreeland. Mary Louise Wilson, who stars, co-wrote the script with Mark Hampton. Directed by Nicholas Martin. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Hello, Dolly!—Carol Channing reprises the role of Dolly Levi, the matchmaker in pursuit of a millionaire, which she created in the 1963 musical. Lee Roy Reams directs. In previews. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Mrs. Klein—Uta Hagen stars in a new suspense drama by Nicholas Wright, about the death, in 1934, of psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's son. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Model Apartment—A new play by Donald Margulies, about a couple whose mentally ill daughter disrupts their retirement plans. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

Moonlight—Jason Robards, Blythe Danner, and Paul Hecht lead the cast in the Roundabout's production of Harold Pinter's latest play. Directed by Karel Reisz. In previews through Oct. 15. Opens Oct. 17 at 7. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Moscow Stations—From London, a limited-run production starring Tom Courtenay. Adapted by Stephen Mulrine from the 1980 novel by Venedikt Yerofeev. Ian Brown, of Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre, directed. In previews through Oct. 14. Opens Oct. 15 at 6:30. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

Nathan the Wise—Jean Cocteau Repertory's staging of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 1779 drama will run in repertory with their solid production of Samuel Beckett's modernist classic "Waiting for Godot." Previews Oct. 13-14. Opens Oct. 15 at 3. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

New England—A dark comedy by Richard Nelson, about a family of English transplants at odds with America. With Larry Bryggman, T. Scott Cunningham, Mia Dillon, Penny Fuller, Tom Irwin, Allison Janney, and Margaret Whitton. Directed by Howard Davies. Previews begin Oct. 17. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Northeast Local—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Terry Alexander, Eileen Heckart, Anthony LaPaglia, and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio in a new play by Tom Donaghy, which follows a working-class family through three decades. Gerald Gutierrez is the director. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Patti LuPone on Broadway—The musical-theatre star, in a six-week concert production. In previews through Oct. 11. Opens Oct. 12 at 6:45. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—This play from the pen of Steve Martin, which had its première in 1993 at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre, is set in 1904, in a Parisian bistro where a young Albert Einstein (Mark Nelson) and a younger Pablo Picasso (Tim Hopper) discuss big ideas. Randall Arney is the director. In previews. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Salome—Steven Berkoff's minimalist interpretation of Oscar Wilde's "Salome," in which he stars as King Herod. Opens Oct. 17 at 7 and continues through Oct. 21. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Songs for a New World—The WPA Theatre opens its nineteenth season with a revue written by Jason Robert Brown and directed by Daisy Prince. Previews begin Oct. 11. (519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Swinging on a Star—A musical tribute to the lyrics of Johnny Burke ("Misty," "Pennies from Heaven," "Moonlight Becomes You"), written and directed by Michael Leeds, with choreography by Kathleen Marshall. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Tempest—The New York Shakespeare Festival's Central Park production, starring Patrick Stewart and directed by George C. Wolfe, moves to Broadway for a twelve-week run. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Two, Nikita—A suspense comedy by Jeffrey Hatcher, set in 1959, in which a citizen of the Soviet Union tries to defect to the United States while Nikita Khruschev is here visiting. Opens Oct. 12 at 8 and runs through Oct. 29. (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 627-7292.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews has returned to Broadway to star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. With Tony Roberts, Michael Nouri, and Rachel York. Written and directed by Blake Edwards. Choreography by Rob Marshall; score by the late Henry Mancini. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Zombies from the Beyond—A musical sendup of the science-fiction movies of the fifties. Previews begin Oct. 11. (Players, 115 MacDougal St. 254-5076.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Admissions—Austin Pendleton directs a new play by Tony Vellela, about the effects of hidden prejudice on a college campus. (New Perspectives, 750 Eighth Ave., at 46th St. 730-2030. Closes Oct. 17.)

Alice—Robert Wilson, Tom Waits, and the Thalia Theatre of Hamburg have teamed up again, this time with writer Paul Schmidt and composer Kathleen Brennan, for a psychohistorical examination of Lewis Carroll and his "Alice" books. Oct. 11-14 at 8. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Banjy Pussy Raging—Idris Mignott's new solo work, a comic look at sex, class, race, and glamour. Directed by Daisy von Scherler Mayer. Wednesdays at 7:30, and Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30. Through Oct. 25. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

Company—The Roundabout Theatre Company opens its thirtieth-anniversary season with a revival of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's 1970 musical about marriage. Directed by Scott Ellis and choreographed by Rob Marshall. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

A Doll's House—Robin Leslie Brown plays Ibsen's songbird turned feminist, Michael Butler her dull and doting husband, in the Pearl Theatre Company's staging. It coasts along securely on traditional tracks, though it's jolted now and again by a chatty tone that seems unsuited to an Oslo drawing room of 1879. Grey Johnson directed. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Oct. 21.)

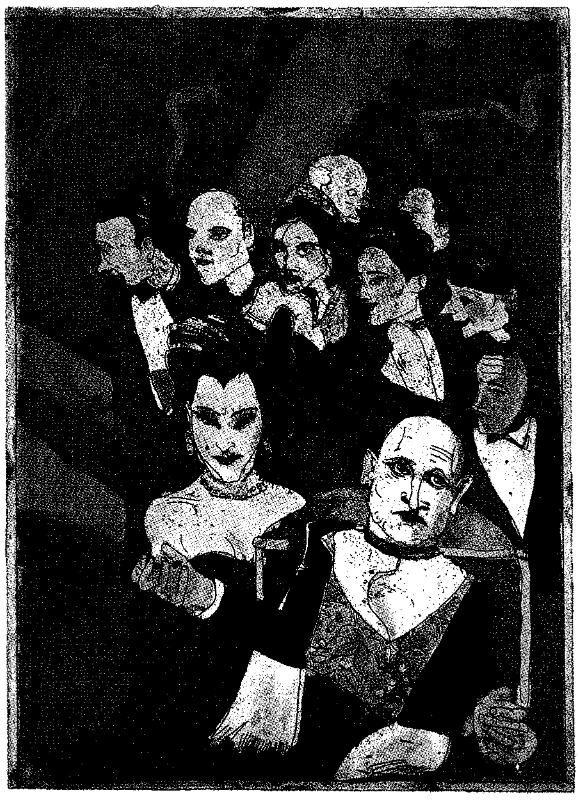
Edith Wharton's Manhattan—An adaptation of her novel "The House of Mirth." (Pulse Ensemble Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. 695-1596. Closes Oct. 14.)

The Emperor Jones—Kate Valk, Paul Lazar, and Dave Shelley are in the cast of the Wooster Group's production of O'Neill's 1920 drama. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes Oct. 15.)

Endgame—A Classic Stage Company production of Samuel Beckett's 1957 play. With Kathleen Chalfant, John Seitz, Irma St. Paule, and Alan Manson. Directed by David Esbjornson. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Oct. 29.)

The Food Chain—In Nicky Silver's new play, the paths of five New Yorkers cross, hilariously. The situations are familiar and sitcomish, but the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors—especially Hope Davis, as a dithery poet, and Phyllis Newman, as a long-suffering Jewish matron whose idea of listening is to talk—give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls directed. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/11/95.) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Garden District—Circle in the Square inaugurates its forty-fifth-anniversary season with two one-acts by Tennessee Williams ("Something Unspoken," starring Myra Carter and Pamela Payton-Wright and directed by Theodore Mann, and "Suddenly Last Summer," starring Elizabeth Ashley and directed by Harold Scott), presented under the title of the original 1958 double bill. (50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

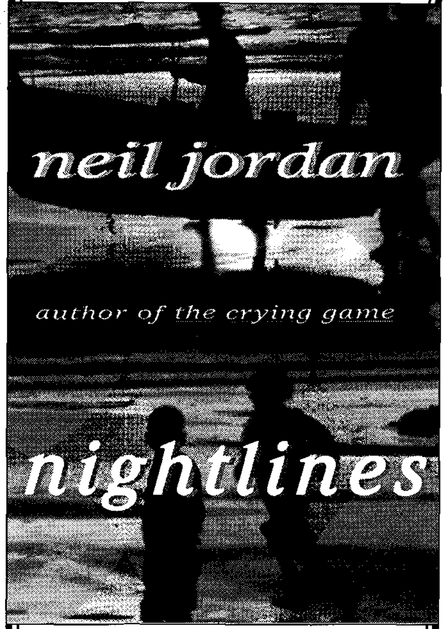


Carmen Du Sautoy, Steven Berkoff, and company, in "Salome," at BAM.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Calvin Klein
eyewear

FROM THE OSCAR AWARD-WINNING WRITER AND DIRECTOR OF *THE CRYING GAME*— A POWERFUL NOVEL OF DESIRE AND DECEPTION



"A dazzling demonstration of Jordan's ability to express himself in words as well as images. As vivid as any of the films he has directed."
—*Financial Times* (London)

"Remarkable. Jordan writes fiction like a poet."
—*New Statesman* (London)

"Powerful and affecting."
—John Banville, *The Observer* (London)

RANDOM HOUSE

HAVING OUR SAY—Bessie Delany (who died last month) and Sadie Delany, two sisters who passed the hundred-year mark, presented their vivid life stories in a 1993 best-seller; the book has been adapted beautifully by Emily Mann, who also directed. Gloria Foster and Mary Alice are brilliant as the sisters, who were taught by their family to "reach high" despite the dogging of Jim Crow. (4/24/95) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING—In this revival of Frank Loesser's 1961 musical, Matthew Broderick has polish and timing, but it's Lillias White's gospel solo in "Brotherhood of Man" that lifts the audience into a zone of joy. (4/24/95) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

IF THIS ISN'T LOVE—Sidney Morris's comedy, which follows a pair of gay lovers from their teens to their forties, in a revival of the Glines' original 1982 staging. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 924-1198. Closes Oct. 29.)

INDISCRETIONS—This production of Jean Cocteau's "Les Parents Terribles," a dark comedy about the perversities of desire in family life, is marred by heavy-handedness and an unsatisfying central performance: Kathleen Turner, playing a hysterically possessive mother, is an unfocussed sprawl with a distractingly unplaceable accent. Roger Rees, Dana Ivey, Cynthia Nixon, and Jude Law also star, under the direction of Sean Mathias. (5/15/95) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

MATHEW IN THE SCHOOL OF LIFE—An angelic android who has been created to absorb the suffering of the world is at the center of this wonderfully disjointed multimedia work, a collaboration by composer John Moran, director Bob McGrath, and the Ridge Theatre. Moran's eerie, meditative score—a collection of music, dialogue, and sampled sound—perfectly suits the otherworldly mood of the celestial-mission-control set. Since the show, which draws on such disparate sources as children's educational programs, theme-park automaton productions, and science-fiction movies, seems to revel in its antinarrative design, it's remarkable that the performances are so coherent and the cumulative effect so lyrical. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Closes Oct. 29.)

MOON OVER BUFFALO—Carol Burnett and Philip Bosco star in Ken Ludwig's new comedy as husband-and-wife actors playing Buffalo with a touring company. Tom Moore is the director. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

NIXON'S NIXON—Gerry Bamman is the title character and Steve Mellor is Henry Kissinger in Russell Lees's new play, set in the White House during a secret meeting on the night before the President's resignation. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes Oct. 22.)

PARTY—In David Dillon's comedy, seven gay men get together to play a strip version of truth or dare, with terrifically funny (if occasionally didactic) results. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

SAME OLD MOON—In Geraldine Aron's sentimental yet hard-edged comedy, an Irish-born writer who is in the process of separating from her husband returns home after years abroad, triggering a flurry of memories. Madeleine Potter is superb as the central character (she plays her from ages nine to forty). The strong performances of Terry Donnelly, as her mother, and Risteard Cooper (a dead ringer for Eugene O'Neill), as her tyrannical, ailing father, show off the breadth of the Irish Rep's talent. Charlotte Moore directed. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 15.)

SIGNATURE THEATRE COMPANY—The company opens its fifth season—which consists of seven plays by Adrienne Kennedy—with revivals of two one-acts, "Funnyhouse of a Negro" (1964; directed by Caroline Jackson Smith) and "A Movie Star Has to Star in Black and White" (1976; directed by Joseph Chaikin), both of which explore the relationship of black people to a largely white society. Ms. Kennedy has genuine insight but filters it through opaque, overly poetic scripts, so that even though the acting in both shows is superb (particularly by Ellen Bethea in "Funnyhouse" and Joan Harris in "Movie Star"), the knowledge that the characters acquire so painfully has to rise through a lot of murk. Perhaps that's part of the point, but there are better ways of making it. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Oct. 22.)

SIN—Kelly Coffield plays an aerial traffic reporter, in a comedy by Wendy MacLeod. Directed by David Petrarca. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

SYLVIA—In A. R. Gurney's comedy, a dog named Sylvia (Jan Hooks) brings meaning to the life of a middle-aged currency trader (John Cunningham) while driving a canine-shaped wedge between him and his wife (Mary Beth Peil). Directed by John Tillinger. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

TALLAHASSEE—The new collaboration between playwrights Len Jenkin and Mac Wellman is a modern take on Ovid's Metamorphoses, set to music by Jim Ragland and Elise Morris. (Workhouse Theatre, 41 White St. 431-9220. Closes Oct. 28.)

TOO JEWISH?—Avi Hoffman sets about reviving Yiddish in this mixture of songs and stories. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

WHAT EVER—Heather Woodbury brings her eight-part solo serial, in which she plays ten major characters and more than ninety minor ones, back to P.S. 122. Directed by Dudley Saunders. Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30. Through Oct. 28. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL—Presenting "Guyworld," by Bret LaGree; "The King," by Denise Ruiz; "Proof Through the Night," by Clarence Coo; and "This Is About a Boy's Fears," by Shaun Neblett. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Oct. 29.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH DEFYING ACTS:** Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE HEIRESS:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ—THE SONGS OF LEIBER AND STOLLER:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **SWINGTIME CANTEEN:** Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

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DANCE

French Taylor

At the Paul Taylor Dance Company's sunny studio on Lower Broadway a couple of weeks ago, men were running around in goofy Napoleon hats, women were swishing cancan skirts, and a mysterious masked couple was creating atmosphere. The company was getting ready to tackle Taylor's fiendishly difficult, marvellously sardonic take on the Belle Époque, "Offenbach Overtures," which premières during the company's current engagement at City Center.

"You can't avoid Offenbach," Taylor said. "He's there every time you turn on the radio." But Taylor's connections to the composer go deeper than that. The most Offenbachian of ballets, Léonide Massine's 1938 "Gaîté Parisienne," happens to be the first ballet that Taylor—who went on to dance with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham before founding his own troupe—ever saw: "Alexandra Danilova and Leon Danielian *were* carrying on. He was flamboyant, and she was the star. I decided at that point that I did *not* want to be a ballet dancer; I just couldn't imagine myself doing it.

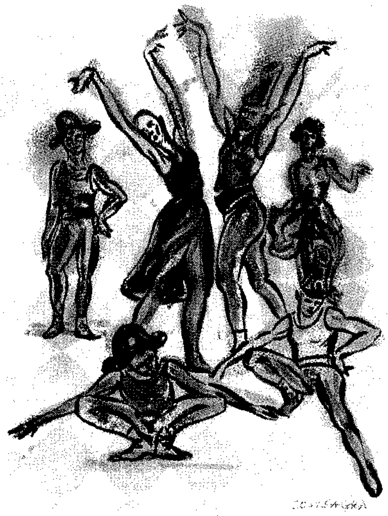
"I'm surprised that I've somehow done an Offenbach piece," continued the choreographer, whose taste usually runs away from froufrou. "But it's nice to have something cheerful."

Paul Taylor Dance Company—Oct. 12 and Oct. 14 at 8: "Cloven Kingdom," "Musical Offering," and "Offenbach Overtures." . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 8, Oct. 13 at 8, Oct. 14 at 2, and Oct. 15 at 7:30: "Arden Court," "Funny Papers," and "Speaking in Tongues." . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 3 and Oct. 17 at 8: "Roses," "Company B," and "Esplanade." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Oct. 22.)

"Constant Stranger"—The performance artist John Kelly makes his Joyce début, in an hour-long work in which he plays all the roles, sings countertenor arias, and dances a homeboy version of the "Dying Swan." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 11-14 at 8 and Oct. 15 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Presence"—An evening-length work choreographed by Christina Jones-Stewart for the Prowess DanceArts Collective incorporating testimony from the dancers about paranormal phenomena. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Oct. 12-15 at 8:30.)

"Death's Door"—Cynthia Oliver adds movements from her Caribbean childhood to a repertoire of African-American dance in her story of a woman's encounter with death. With Renee Redding-Jones, who, like Oliver, dances with Ronald Brown/Evidence. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 12-15 at 9.)



PIER CONSAGRA

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

PJ Harvey—Myth and hype surround Polly Jean Harvey, a twenty-five-year-old slip of a thing who sings of heaven, hell, and spurned love. But the truth is, she's just a rocker with a taste for campy drama (like the hot-pink catsuit she often performs in) and a voice of almost elemental force. On "To Bring You My Love," her fourth album, the songs grow from monolithic grooves, over which guitars blare happily, weird noises rattle and shake, textures mutate, and an organ floats and hums. It's a record that captures the despair of the blues with a provocatively stark and unapologetic sound. With Ben Harper. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Oasis—Except for the fistfight between singer Liam Gallagher and drummer Tony McCarroll in a Paris topless bar and McCarroll's subsequent departure from the band, the sailing has been fairly smooth for these stoic moptops from Manchester. They wowed the festival crowd at Glastonbury and even managed to sell a few copies of their celebrated début, "Definitely Maybe," in the States. Their upcoming disk, "(What's the Story) Morning Glory," stares down the sophomore jinx with another string of punchy Beatlesque numbers. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Roy Ayers—Free jazz by the water. (Wintergarden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Oct. 11 at 6:30.)

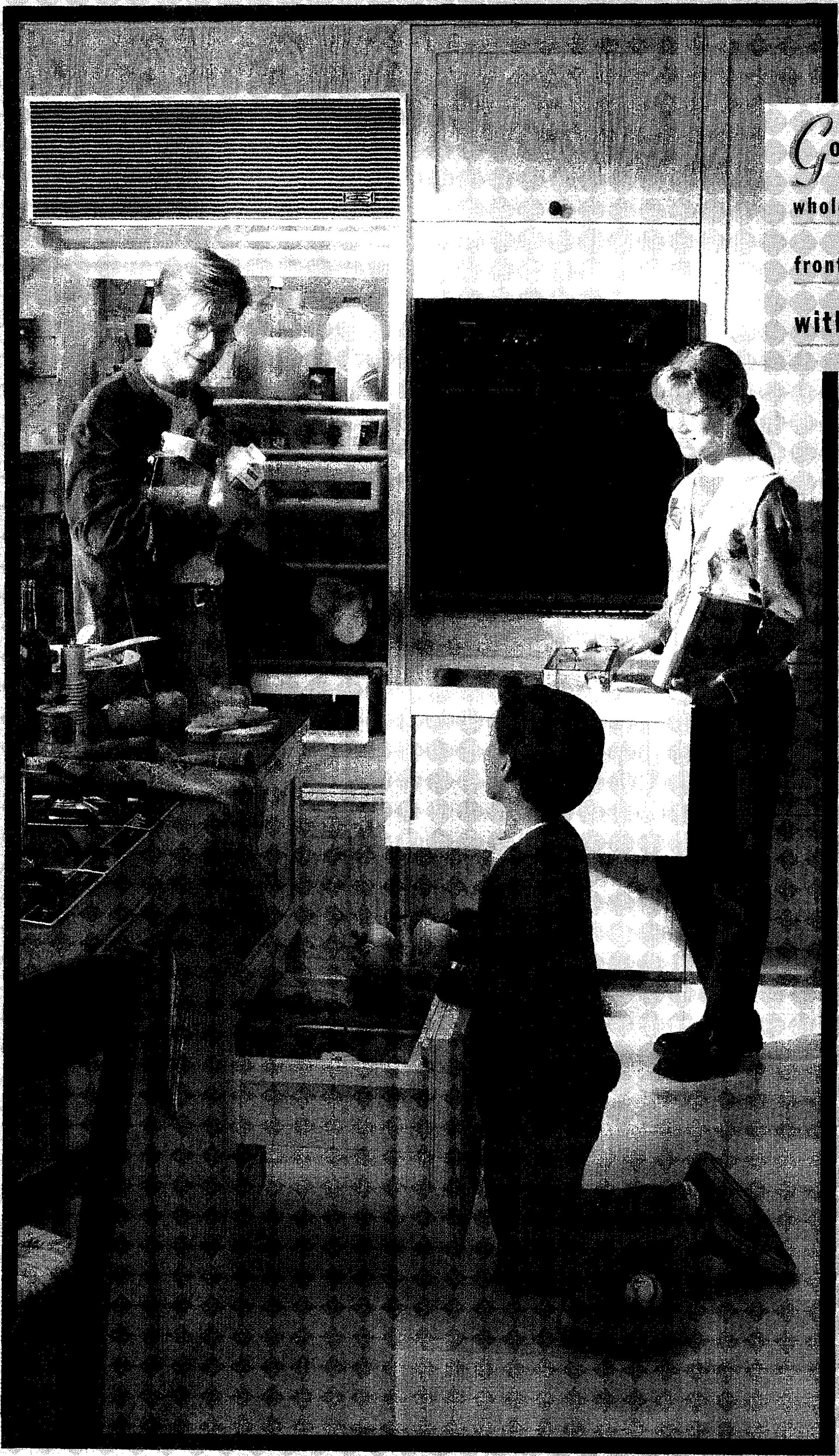
"New Orleans to Now"—Jon Faddis and his ever alert Carnegie Hall Jazz band journey back to where it all began, with help from two brilliant players: clarinettist Kenny Davern, a musical historian, and ninety-year-old trumpeter Doc Cheatham, who got his information firsthand. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 12 at 8.)

Cecil Taylor—For a long time, no one paid much attention to this pianist. He was a freak who played the way that Bartók and Hindemith would have played had they been jazz musicians. But masters often need apostles to prepare their way, and that is what McCoy Tyner and Keith Jarrett have been doing—knowingly or not—for the past few decades. Once in a while Taylor opens up enough to reveal his roots, and you can hear traces of Ellington, Gershwin, and Monk. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 12 at 8.)

Julio Iglesias—It's still too early to speculate, but with this Spanish heartthrob's lustre already fading, it's not hard to envision him turning up on one of those late-night ads, pitching a *not-sold-in-any-store collection, or,* like Engelbert Humperdinck, hawking his latest concert video and souvenir program on the Home Shopping Network. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 12-14 at 8.)

Elton John—In the early seventies, his records were filled with gorgeous melodies and theatrical arrangements—part art rock, part Tin Pan Alley, and part blue-eyed soul—and his image was pure flamboyance. Later, after he ditched the rhinestone goggles and the feather boa, he contracted what might be called the Steve Winwood syndrome, mellowing into a tasteful yuppie icon. His new record, "Made in America," features some of the best writing he and his longtime collaborator, Bernie Taupin, have done in years. And, as anyone who's seen him live will tell you, the king of schmalz is still a dazzling performer. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 12-14 and Oct. 17 at 8.)

New York Pops—Conducted by Skitch Henderson, with special guest Neil Sedaka. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 13 at 8.)



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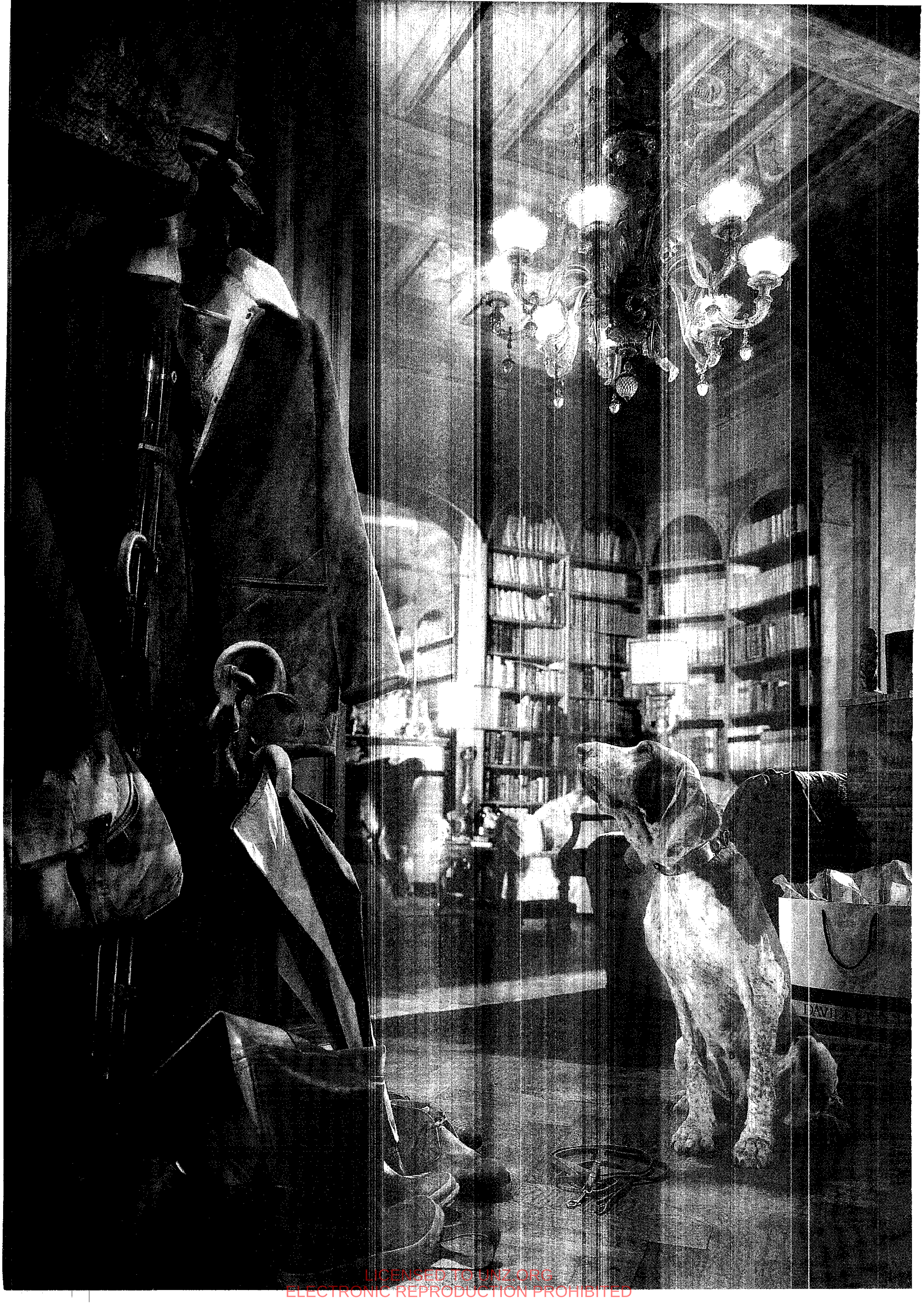

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Diana Ross—Is she a goddess? The hair, the costume changes, the imperiousness (stagehands are forbidden to make eye contact) might lead you to think so. But the voice, which was never as great as the material that propelled it, has faded. For devotees only. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 13-14 at 8.)

Manhattan Transfer / Mose Allison—The bubbly singing group and the great jazz pianist. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 13-14 at 8.)

"Alternative Jazz"—Left-of-center jazz, interpreted by the bands of two smart young leaders—clarinettist Don Byron and drummer Phil Haynes—and an old master, the ever exacting pianist Paul Bley. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 13-14 at 8.)

Maceo Parker—A fifteen-year veteran of James Brown's legendary JBs, this tenor saxophonist spent the seventies as a pivotal member of George Clinton's Parliament/Funkadelic empire. Since then, he's put out a few straight-ahead jazz discs and a couple of Brown-style extravaganzas. Live, he can still thrill. (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 777-6800. Oct. 13-14 at 8.)

Ozzy Osbourne—As the former singer of Black Sabbath (and thus the Louis Pasteur of heavy metal), doesn't old Oz at least deserve an honorary invite to the Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame? The staff must be afraid he'd bite somebody's head off. And the disrespect continues: "Satanic claptrap" is the term that the editors of "The Rolling Stone Album Guide" reserve for his work with Sabbath, while even more unkind words have been levelled at his short-lived solo project, the Blizzard of Oz. But the forty-six-year-old rocker may have the last laugh: his To Hell with Retirement Tour is packing them in across the heartland. Have yourself an early Halloween. (Roseland. Oct. 14 at 8.)

Master Muscians of Jajouka—Moroccan music for drums, pipe, and lute. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 14 at 8.)

Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra—Wynton Marsalis leads a program that features "jazz masterworks" along with excerpts from "Blood on the Fields," his 1994 orchestral work. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Oct. 16 at 8.)

Peter Frampton—For those who came of age in the seventies, Frampton was either a joke or a peerless back-seat aphrodisiac. Blessed with Roger Daltrey's hair, Marc Bolan's sex appeal, and a small arsenal of electronic gadgets that transformed his stadium-rock-by-the-numbers guitar into not-so-subtle innuendo, the man rode to glory on "Frampton Comes Alive," an epic live album whose gatefold became the marijuana-cleaning surface of choice for a generation of potheads. An appearance as Billy Shears in the box-office bomb "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and a near-fatal car crash in 1978 brought an end to his airwave-clogging peak, but he can still wow the faithful. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. Oct. 16 at 8.)

Cabaret Convention—The first of a five-night showtunes-and-standards blowout, featuring Karen Akers (see Rainbow & Stars), Nancy LaMott, Margaret Whiting (see Tavern on the Green), and Ronny Whyte. (Town Hall. Oct. 16 at 6.)

CLUBS

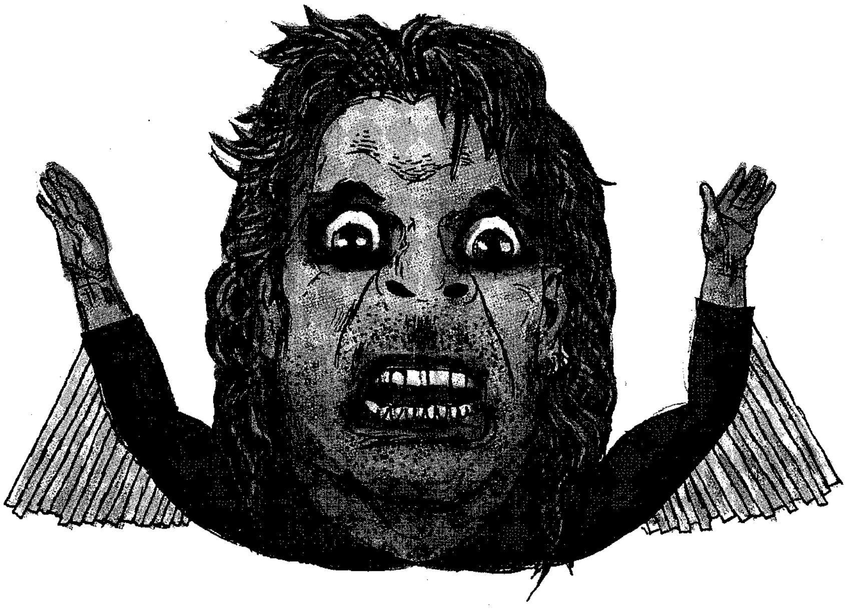
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Oct. 11: Guitarist and singer **JOE LOUIS WALKER,** who slants to the gospel side of the blues the way Robert Cray leans toward soul. His eye-opening collections, "Live at Slim's" (volumes 1 and 2), prove he does his best work in front of a congregation. With **TAB BENOIT,** a twenty-seven-year-old Louisianan who plays volcanic guitar and sings the blues like a crazed preacher. Oct. 12: The Rounder Records twenty-fifth-anniversary bluegrass tour. Three well-respected bandleaders—fiddler Laurie Lewis, banjoist J. D. Crowe, and guitarist Del McCoury—square off for a friendly bout of anything-you-can-play-I-can-play-faster. The infamously eccentric guitarist **DAVID LINDLEY** appears on Oct. 13, with percussionist Hani Naser. Lindley, whose slide work has energized records by everyone from Ry Cooder to Jackson Browne, fancies garish Day-Glo outfits and vintage instruments of equal wattage. Oct. 14: The **ROCHES.** Maggie, Terre, and Suzzy return once again with their inimitable blend of swooping, alien harmonies, unrequited-love songs, and whimsy. A New York institution.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Oct. 14: **BO DIDDLEY.** Those pounding tom-toms, those sinewy maracas, that distorted, fuse-blowing guitar. Call it hambone, call it shave and a haircut, two bits, call it anything you want—it's still going to be the Bo Diddley beat. And once it gets you in its clutches, it's impossible to shake loose.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Oct. 13-14: The Celtic rock of **SUSAN MC KEOWN & THE CHANTING HOUSE.** The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 12: **MIKE WATT.** Oct. 16: **SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS,** a group of psychobilly



GARY PANTER

Ozzy Osbourne, at Roseland.

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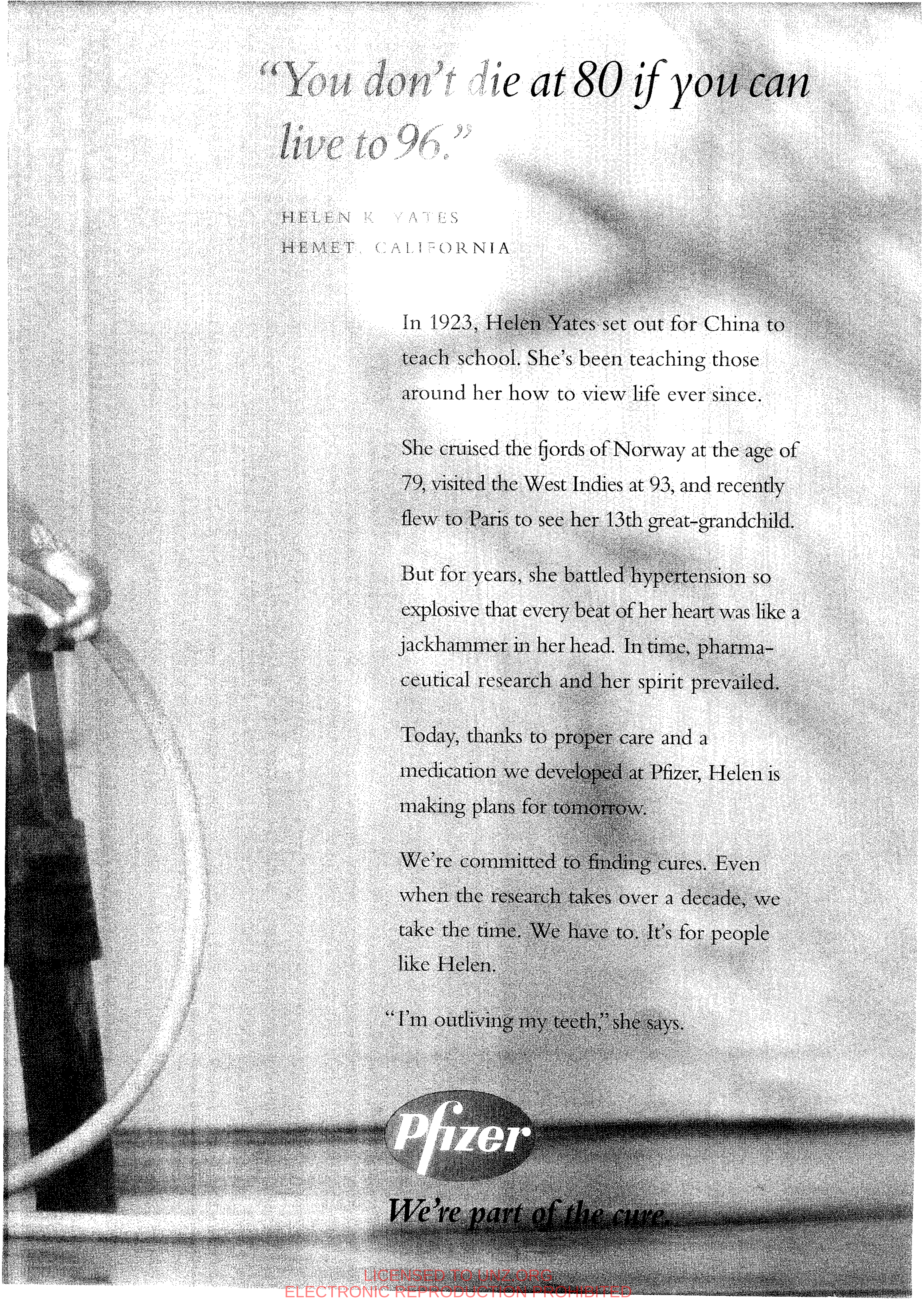

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Bird's best bop on verve
Charlie Parker
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Charlie Parker ~ Verve
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The Manhattan Transfer Anthology ~ Rhino
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Giving Myself To You
Gerald Albright ~ Atlantic
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swamp rockers from Chapel Hill. With the Swingin' Neckbreakers. Oct. 17: **BURNING SPEAR,** a native of Jamaica (his real name is Winston Rodney) who has been one of reggae's finest for more than two decades. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Oct. 17: The **MEKONS,** the band that wouldn't quit. Over the past sixteen years, this tenacious Leeds combo has evolved into a fine country-punk outfit with a bawdy sense of humor. Singers Jon Langford and the silken-voiced Sally Timms switch effortlessly from rough-and-tumble rock to heartbreaking ballads. The band's live shows can be sloppy, but they're never a disappointment.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Oct. 11: **JAMES MC MURTY.** This Texas bar-stool historian (and son of novelist Larry McMurtry) writes taut narratives about El Caminos and small towns swallowed up by big cities. His terrific third record, "Where'd You Hide the Body," is full of intricate acoustic guitar, pedal steel, and plainspoken conviction. Oct. 14: The **MEKONS** (see Maxwell's). Oct. 15-16: The Bush Tetras. Oct. 17: **JIM LAUDERDALE.**

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Brazilian percussionist **NANA VASCONCELOS** finishes up a two-night run on Oct. 11. Dining.

• •

RADIO WEST 43RD STREET

Songs from our own hit parade.

DOWNTOWN (Neil Young, "Mirror Ball").

QUEER (Garbage, "Garbage").

WHERE WILL I BE (Emmylou Harris, "Wrecking Ball").

GOIN' NOWHERE (Chris Isaak, "Forever Blue").

THE BROOKLYNITES (Soul Coughing, "Music from the Motion Picture: 'Blue in the Face' ").

LITTLE MUSCLE (Catherine Wheel, "Happy Days").

A GIRL LIKE YOU (Edwyn Collins, "Gorgeous George").

SOMETHING DIFFERENT (Shaggy, "Boombastic").

SOMETHING STUPID (The Mavericks, "Music for All Occasions").

HURT SO GOOD (Jimmy Somerville, "Dare to Love").

LONDON, CAN YOU WAIT (Gene, "Olympian").

AIN'T NUTHIN' BUT A SHE THING (Salt-n-Pepa, "Ain't Nuthin' But a She Thing").

PETIT PAYS (Cesaria Evora, "Cesaria Evora").

FLOWER (Pansy Division, "Pile Up").

LOOKS LIKE THIS COULD BE THE END (The Rake's Progress, "Altitude").

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Oct. 11: **JOE ELY.** Oct. 12: **ALICE DONUT,** a New York quintet that could be described as the thinking fan's Dead Milkmen. Oct. 13: **WILSON PICKETT.** His dirty mind and dangerous allure earned him the nickname the Wicked Pickett, but this Alabama-born singer has always been more than a dance on the dark side. Rhino Records just released "A Man and a Half" (another great nickname), an anthology that proves that Pickett was never just a one-dimensional belter. Supported by the legendary Muscle Shoals band, he obliterated laid-back Southern R. & B. with frenetic material like "Mustang Sally" and "Ninety-Nine and a Half," and he could work through a ballad like "Hey Jude"—recommended to him by Duane Allman—with a convincing delicacy. At fifty-four he's still a powerhouse, and when he tears into "Funky Broadway," the effect is pandemonium. Bring your boogie shoes. Oct. 17: The wonderful **SHAWN COLVIN,** whose most recent album, "Cover Girl," offers wistful renditions of other people's tunes.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Oct. 11: **BABE THE BLUE OX.** Oct. 15: Back in the heyday of punk and New Wave, people used to describe **PERE UBU** as "avant-garde," which seemed to mean that nobody quite understood what they were up to. With the soon-to-be-famous local combo **SKELETON KEY.**

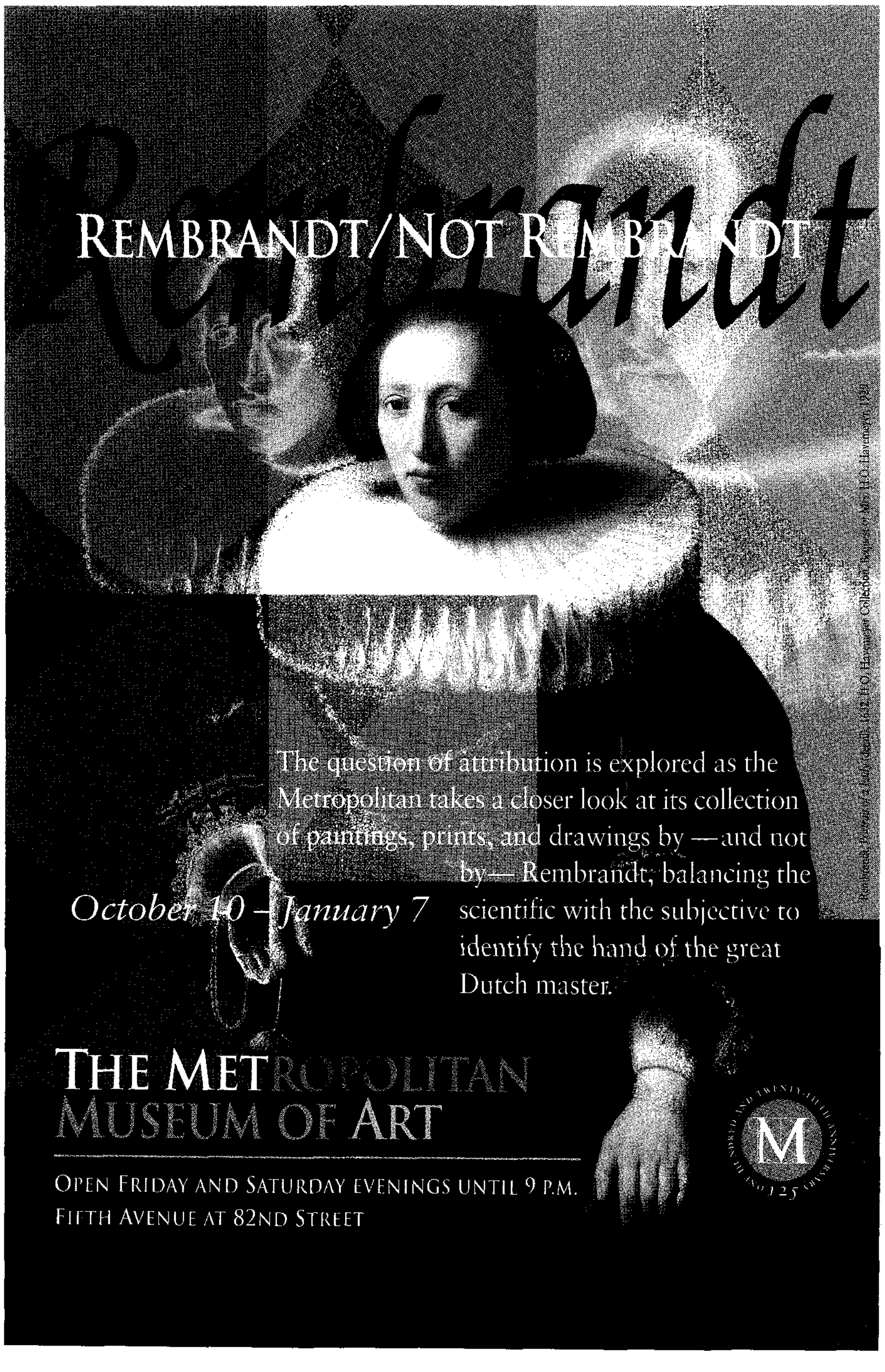
JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Tangy-voiced singer **WESLIA WHITFIELD** (in through mid-October) interprets the American popular canon. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—**STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI** finishes a two-night run on Oct. 11, and the grand old man of the jazz violin is not to be missed. He may never escape his fabled association with Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, but for his part, Grappelli pushed past Hot Club of France nostalgia long ago. He loves tearing through standards and coating ballads with full Gallic charm. **CHICK COREA** takes over on Oct. 12. His bands, both electric and acoustic, carry a tinge of slickness about them, but Corea remains a clever composer and fastidious group leader, and overlooking his contributions to contemporary jazz piano is tantamount to rewriting history. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BARBARA COOK** is in command of this urbane dinner-and-music room through Oct. 14, backed up by her longtime pianist and arranger Wally Harper. Her voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue, and her material is as supple as a fresh corsage. ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the suave and sybaritic **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Oct. 15: the **TERENCE BLANCHARD** quartet. As Spike Lee's Bernard Hermann, Blanchard has turned in some vibrant and atmospheric scores (his latest is "Clockers"), but his capabilities as a jazz soloist aren't in dan-


Rembrandt
REMBRANDT/NOT REMBRANDT
The question of attribution is explored as the Metropolitan takes a closer look at its collection of paintings, prints, and drawings by —and not by— Rembrandt, balancing the scientific with the subjective to identify the hand of the great Dutch master.
October 10 – January 7
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
OPEN FRIDAY AND SATURDAY EVENINGS UNTIL 9 P.M.
FIFTH AVENUE AT 82ND STREET
M
125

ger of being overlooked—he's the best of the neo-Marsalis trumpeters, a thrilling virtuoso player with a romantic streak. The **JIMMY HEATH** big band swings by for a week on Oct. 17.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 14: The **GROOVE COLLECTIVE.** Oct. 16: Saxophonist and composer **ALLAN CHASE,** the author of a dissertation on Sun Ra and a member of Your Neighborhood Saxophone Quartet, appears with his own quartet. The group blends the romping spirit of the Arkestra with the thoughtful concision of Sonny Rollins's pianoless foursomes. Frisky and adventurous.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Through Oct. 13: **MEL TORMÉ.** Singer, actor, author, arranger, songwriter, drummer, movie buff, and old-gun collector, the Velvet Fog is the latest passenger on the I'm-gonna-be-cool-with-those-kids bandwagon (thanks in part to a Mountain Dew commercial and an appearance on "Seinfeld"). The eternal enfant terrible began singing professionally around kindergarten, and he hasn't stopped since. And, as with many a terrible infant (Mickey Rooney, Sammy Davis, Jr., Orson Welles, etc.), you either dig him or you don't. But his gifts are undeniable, and at seventy he's still in command of his warm, fluid baritone and his aggressively hip delivery. On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—With her svelte silhouette, haute couture, and piquant coif, **KAREN AKERS** (through mid-October) is every inch—some seventy-two—the chanteuse. (Moviegoers may remember her as the Copacabana songbird in "The Purple Rose of Cairo.") . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

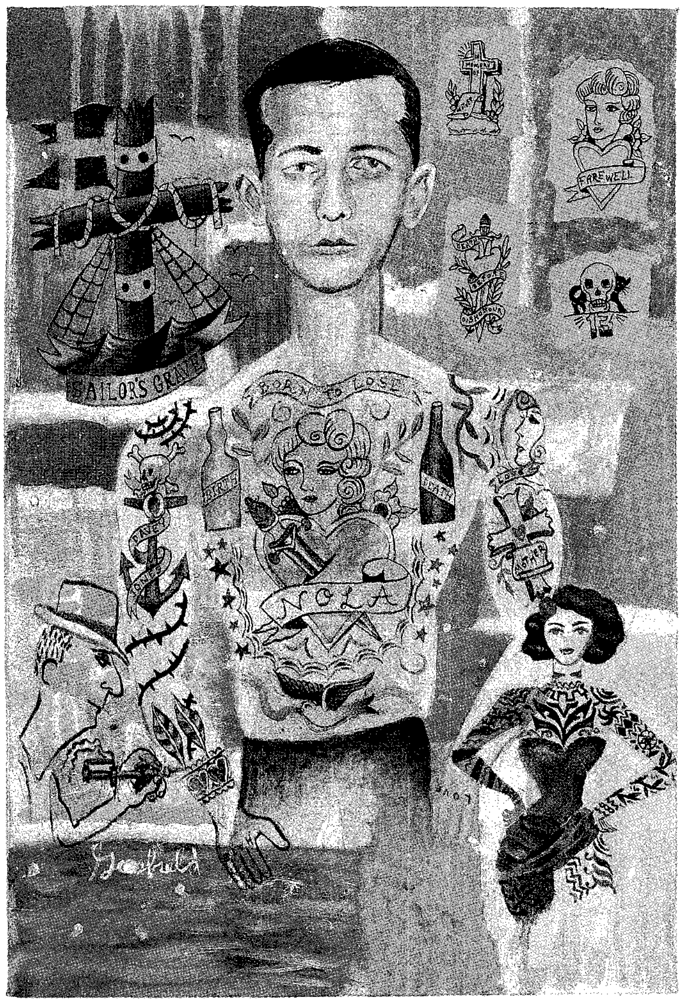
Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Oct. 15: the **MAL WALDRON** quintet. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—Through mid-October: **MARGARET WHITING,** a no-business-like-show-business gal with a cheerful, life-affirming voice.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Oct. 15: the **GERI ALLEN** trio. Allen is one of the most gifted and original pianists of her generation, and she keeps reinventing herself. If her latest recording, "Twenty-One," is any indication, she now wants in on the mainstream. The **PHARAOH SANDERS** quartet begins a weeklong run on Oct. 17. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Trumpeter **TOM HARRELL,** who blows in Oct. 11-14, has a masterly warmth that puts him in league with the likes of Art Farmer and Clark Terry. This mature stylist produces perfectly chiselled melodies, and his solos leave the room with you. Oct. 17: Singer **DOMINIQUE EADE,** who boasts a dark and enveloping alto, a penchant for melodic risks, and the ability to resolve them with assurance and grace. On "My Resistance Is Low," her impressive second album, she covers obscure gems, writes intriguing originals, and swings ballads into deep, delicious grooves.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Oct. 14: piano and bass with **JAMES WILLIAMS** and **MILT HINTON.** Dining.



"Pierced Hearts and True Love: A Century of Drawings for Tattoos," at The Drawing Center.

JOSH GOSFIELD

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

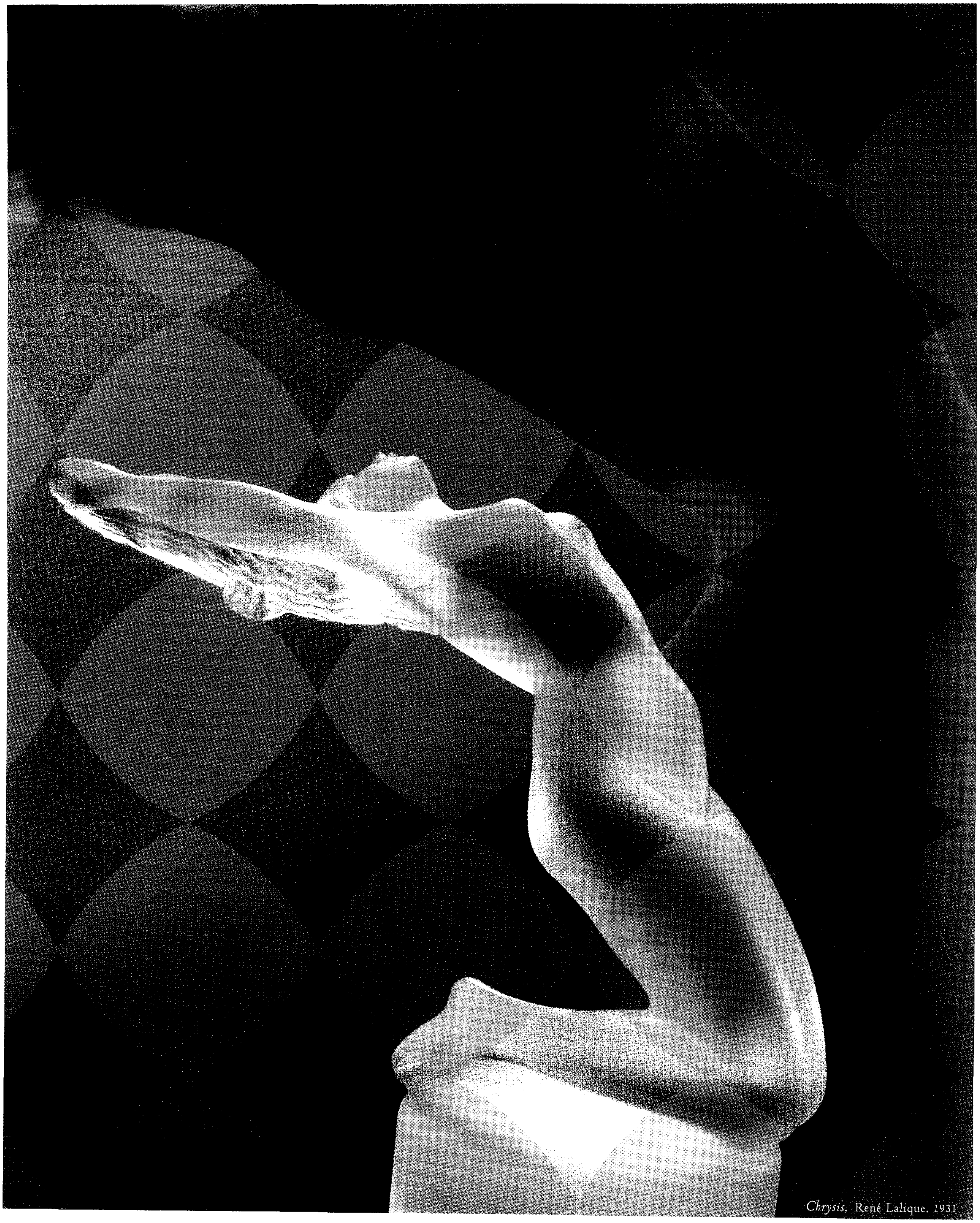
Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Since the beginning of this century, scholarly and scientific analyses have cut the number of paintings believed to be authentic Rembrandts in half—from six hundred and fifty to around three hundred. "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," an exhibition displaying fifty-five paintings from the museum's collection by Rembrandt, his pupils, and emulators of his style, along with a selection of drawings and prints, explores this change in the state of things. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "John Singleton Copley in America," seventy-five portraits of affluent Bostonians and New Yorkers, done before the artist packed up for London in 1775. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ The works of Francisco Goya have always been a cornerstone of the Met's collection; for many years the museum handbook has had his portrait of Don Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zuñiga (the little boy in red, with a bird on a string which is being greedily regarded by a trio of cats) on its cover. "Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art" handsomely assembles all of the museum's Goya holdings. Most of the works are prints, the medium in which the artist expressed himself most boldly. The final gallery offers a side-by-side comparison of the two "Majas on a Balcony": an unquestionably authentic painting on loan from a private collector, and the Met's version, whose authenticity has recently been challenged. The Met's majas are looking rather wan. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ "Pages of Perfection," Islamic art from the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, is remarkable not only for its rare early examples of Muslim calligraphy (dating as far back as the eighth century) but also for a group of late, decadent miniatures that imitate Western painting. One bizarre collage consists of little Italianate Madonnas surrounding a seventeenth-century Persian copy of a Velázquez portrait of a lady and a tiny allegorical engraving about arithmetic; the effect is eerily postmodern. Through Dec. 10. . . . ¶ Trenchcoats, epaulets, tartans, aviator glasses, khaki, and many other elements of civilian dress were recruited from the militaries of the world. "Swords Into Ploughshares," in the Costume Institute, offers a hundred outfits and a host of visual links between the wardrobes of the warrior and leisure classes. Through Nov. 26. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open, when weather permits, until Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944," which comes to New York from The Hague, via Washington, D.C., is a medium-sized blockbuster, with a hundred and sixty paintings and drawings, close to half of them from the thirties and forties. The MOMA installation has a few exclusives: "Broadway Boogie Woogie" and the unfinished "Victory Boogie Woogie," and a re-creation of the artist's last studio, at 15 E. 59th St. Through Jan. 23. . . . ¶ A small show of works from the seventies to the present by the French Conceptualist Annette Messager, who combines photographed, painted, and drawn images with found and constructed objects and text. Starts Oct. 12. . . . ¶ "Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George," ninety-three photographs taken at the artist's upstate retreat, most of them from the twenties and thirties. Through Jan. 2. . . . ¶ "Light Construction" examines, through models, large photographs, and drawings, the concepts of transparency and translucency in contemporary architecture. Through Jan. 2. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology" features more than two hundred of the Popster's hard and soft sculptures, collages, and drawings for existing large-scale projects and proposed colossal monuments. Through Jan. 21. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Joel-Peter Witkin," a mid-career retrospective of the photographer's astonishing and horrifying œuvre. Starts Oct. 13. . . . ¶ Fluorescent-light sculptures from 1963 to 1987 by Dan Flavin. Through Nov. 30. . . . ¶ A survey of the conceptual photography of Dieter Appelt, supplemented by sculptural objects made by the artist for inclusion in these images. Through Nov. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Edward Hopper and the American Imagination." Through Oct. 15. . . . ¶ "Florine Stettheimer: Manhattan Fantastica." Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ A show titled "Picassoid" examines, in the works of American artists, the influence of three phases of Picasso's career: Cubism, Classicism, and Surrealism. Through Dec. 10. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)


Chrysis, René Lalique, 1931

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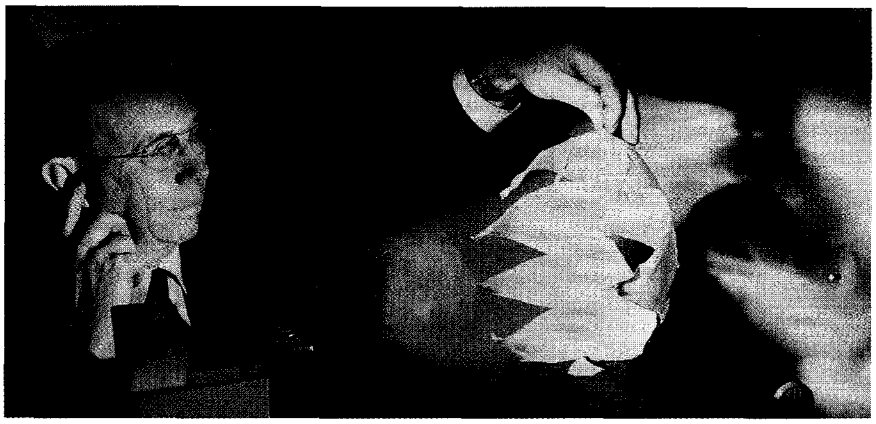
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A hundred and forty botanical watercolors, illustrations, engravings, and lithographs are on view; a third of them are of orchids. Among the artists represented are Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Margaret Mee, Marilena Pistoia, and Georg Dionys Ehret. . . . ¶ The skeletons of some one hundred saurischian and ornithischian dinosaurs have been cleaned and repositioned, and they're waiting for you. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Leon Polk Smith: American Painter," a retrospective of large geometrical abstractions, most of them on oddly shaped canvases, by an eighty-nine-year-old artist who was inspired sixty years ago by his first sight of a Mondrian. Through Jan. 7. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)



Self-portrait by Harold Edgerton (Danziger).

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890-1990," a large exhibition of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and graphic works by fifty artists, including Eric Bulatov, Léon Bakst, Marc Chagall, Ilya Kabokov, El Lissitzky, and Komar & Melamid. Through Jan. 28. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Fantasy and Reality: Drawings from the Sunny Crawford von Bülow Collection." This small, tightly focussed collection was begun by the socialite who fell ill in 1980 under famously mysterious circumstances, and has been continued by her daughter Cosima. The forty-six pieces on exhibit form a delightful sequence of little masterworks from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, mostly by French and Italian draftsmen. Among the standouts are two Ingres pencil portraits, one of a boy in a revolutionary bonnet, the other of a surly young man in ill health; an ebullient red-chalk "Temple of Diana," by Watteau; and a very amusing Nicolas Hüet watercolor, "Study of the Giraffe Given to Charles X by the Viceroy of Egypt, 1827," depicting a then world-famous beast (it prompted a craze for girafferie in France) and its dozing Egyptian keeper. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "From Jackson to Lincoln: Democracy and Dissent," a helping of Americana—including letters, manuscripts, books, and drawings—from the Gilder Lehrman Collection. Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Amanaplanacanalpanama," an installation by Luis Camnitzer, includes a canal made of resin and a canal lock made of children's construction toys. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Four Corners/Cuatro Esquinas," recent oil paintings and charcoal drawings by José Morales. Through Jan. 7. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Edvard Munch and Harald Sohlberg: Landscapes of the Mind." A feast of paintings, drawings, and prints from the Norwegian turn-of-the-century masters. Starts Oct. 12. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11:30 to 5:30; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Marcel Broodthaers (1924-76)—"Section Publicité," the final chapter of the Belgian Conceptualist's "Musée d'Art Moderne: Département des Aigles," a project that had been a major preoccupation of his. This segment presents two-dimensional images of eagles, in photocollages, slide projections, and vitrines. Through Nov. 25. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays. . . . ¶ A show of the artist's posters and books is at Gibson, 568 Broadway, through Nov. 11.)

George Condo / Julio González (1876-1942)—Once again the painter exploits the kind of absurd juxtapositions that delighted the Surrealists, dressing up faceless mannequins, after the manner of de Chirico, in ornate costumes straight out of Velázquez. / Drawings and studies by a pioneer in welded-iron sculpture. Both shows through Oct. 21. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

Emlen Etting (1905-91)—"At Ease: Soldiers and Sailors 1940-1960." Paying oblique (and campy) homage to the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Jane Stubbs has assembled a show of works on paper by a well-known illustrator of the forties and fifties. Military themes are the focus, but it's a far cry from "The Naked and the Dead": Etting lavishes affectionate, even prurient attention on his men in uniform, many of whom he depicts in various stages of dishabille. Through Dec. 31. (Stubbs Books & Prints, 153 E. 70th St.)

Marisol / Altoon Sultan—The artist's first solo show in six years consists of her familiar portrait sculptures, made of wood beams and plywood. / Unpopulated plein-air farmscapes in oil, gouache, and egg tempera. Both shows through Oct. 21. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Jackson Pollock (1912-56)—An exhibition of recently discovered paintings and works on paper covering all phases of the artist's career, from the Bentonesque, frankly corny "Family Scene" (circa 1934-36) to Surrealist-influenced work of the early forties to mature work—in particular, "Vertical" (1949), which looks like a small, narrow rectangle cut out of one of the artist's larger, grander canvases. Through Oct. 28. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Pat Steir—"North Sea Passage." A departure from the recent "Waterfalls" series: mostly large-scale new paintings in which turbid whorls of paint reminiscent of both Turner and Pollock conjure images of stygian abysses. Steir seems to have her mind on the sublime. Through Oct. 14. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Early Mondrian"—Paintings, drawings, and watercolors from the 1890s through the 1920s, focussing on landscapes, flowers, and nudes. A small complement to the Mondrian show at MOMA. Through Nov. 11. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

"From Left to Right: Social Realism in Germany and Russia, Circa 1919-33"—The links between German art of the Weimar era and Soviet revolutionary images are explored through the works of John Heartfield, George Grosz, Dmitri Moor, Otto Dix, Käthe Kollwitz, Viktor Deni, and many others. Through Nov. 4. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**LENNART ANDERSON** and **MICHAEL STEINER,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 28. . . . **JAMES LEE BYARS,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 21. . . . **STEPHEN DE STAEBLER,** CDS Gallery, 76 E. 79th St. Through Nov. 14. . . . **JANET FISH,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Oct. 28. . . . **GRACE KNOWLTON,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through Nov. 4. . . . **ANNETTE LEMIEUX,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Nov. 16. . . . **SOL LE WITT,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. Through Oct. 21. . . . **ALEXANDER LIBERMAN,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Oct. 28. . . . **FAITH RINGGOLD,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 4. . . . **LADIS W. SABO,** York, 21 E. 65th St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays; through Oct. 14.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Alex Bag—This young video artist, hitherto simply Alex, recently adopted a surname in homage to the early-seventies proto-punk performance artist Alice Bag. The gallery has provided comfy sofas to facilitate the leisurely viewing of two monitors, one of which shows archival footage (the last TV appearance of the Sex Pistols, Patti Smith on "Saturday Night Live," etc.) and the other Bag's own sardonic, sometimes extremely funny little narratives and monologues, in which she impersonates a slacker student, a drama queen, and a phone-sex vixen who kittenishly suggests that her unheard callers quit their crummy jobs or kill themselves. Through Oct. 21. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Keith Edmier—Sculptures by a quirky young artist whose background is as a designer of horror/sci-fi film effects. "Nowhere (Insideout)," for example, is an extraterrestrial "window" made of semitransparent purple resin, buckling inward some three feet and featuring a nasty, scarlike crack; it sustains a mood of barely controlled menace and still remains bizarrely gorgeous. Through Oct. 21. (Petzel, 26 Wooster St.)

Toland Grinnell—"Booty," a large-scale multimedia installation. Grinnell's obsession is vinyl—he has transformed the entire gallery (even the front desk) into a huge, Oldenburgian soft sculpture tied to an inane narrative about a shipwrecked pirate trying to communicate with an albino ape. The show doesn't quite hold together (with a premise like that, how could it?), but there's a certain charm to the artist's inventive Naugahyde mania. Through Oct. 14. (Basilico, 26 Wooster St.)

Holly Hughes—With a jumble of shapes and a bright palette—there is a lot of orange here—the artist syncopates the compositions of eleven paintings, gouaches, and prints. The smaller circular pieces are tight and have a lot of rhythm; the larger works suggest a feminine Kandinsky. Through Oct. 14. (Arstark, 568 Broadway.)

Robin Lowe—Strange, intriguing oil portraits that render human subjects as lifeless blobs, like garden gnomes made of lard, in a painterly style suggestive of Philip Pearlstein without his humanity. Obviously based on snapshots, they manage to be both spontaneous and lifeless. Through Oct. 28. (Bonakdar, 130 Prince St.)

Raymond Pettibon / Sigmar Polke—A generous selection of drawings by the Los Angeles artist, whose work mixes cartoon aesthetics and a druggy yet bone-dry sense of humor, playing on the tension between enigmatic

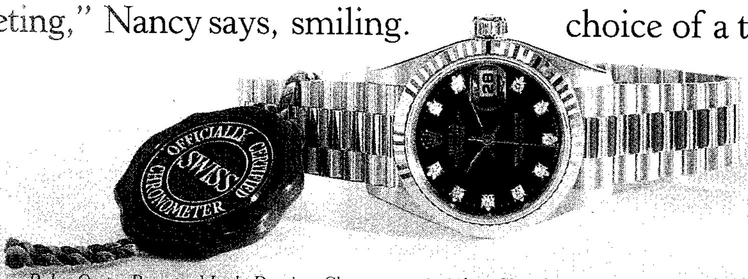
"If there's one thing I want to be known for, it's that I never gave up on a golf course." *Nancy Lopez*

Nancy Lopez is such a gracious presence on the LPGA Tour that it's easy to underestimate her competitiveness. Fans are so struck by her ever-present smile and warmth they forget that this LPGA Hall of Fame athlete and mother of three has put together one of the most impressive careers in the history of her sport.

"I've always loved playing golf, and loved competing," Nancy says, smiling. "Even as a kid of twelve in New Mexico, when I won my first amateur title, it was fun playing against the best. It still is."

As keen a competitor as she is, Nancy's level of grace and consistency is just as exceptional, and she has become one of the most admired and beloved athletes in all of sport. Nancy's commitment to excellence is also reflected in her choice of a timepiece.

ROLEX



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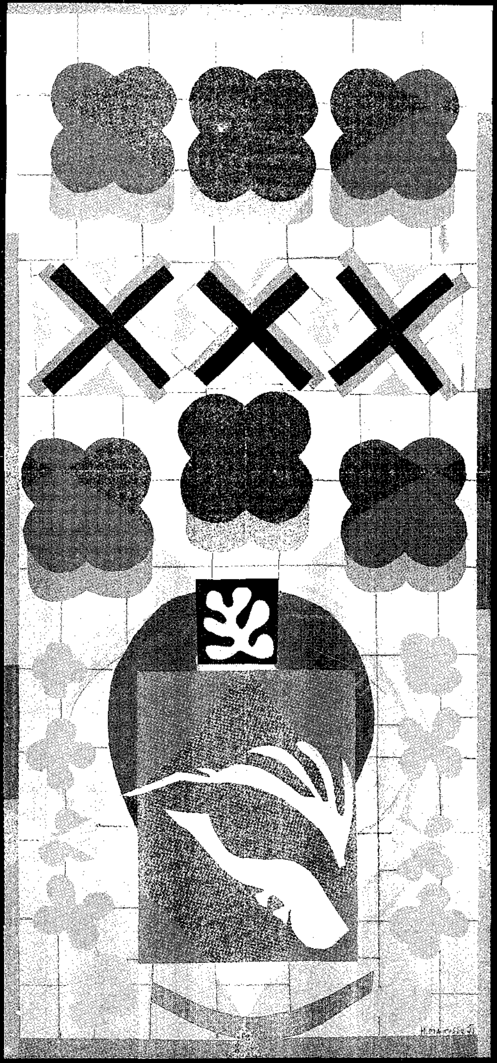


IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN PAINTINGS,
DRAWINGS AND SCULPTURE (PART I)

Christie's auction of Impressionist and Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture (Part I) will be held on Tuesday, November 7 at 7pm in our galleries at 502 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10022. This sale will be on view from November 2. All pre-sale exhibitions and auctions are open to the public (the November 7 evening sale is by ticket only; please call 212 546 1128). To purchase catalogues, please call 800 395 6300.

For more information, please contact Franck Giraud at 212 546 1170.

Property from the Victoria H. Sperry Trust. Henri Matisse, *Poissons chinois*, signed and dated bottom right 'H. Matisse 51', gouache on paper cut and pasted and charcoal on paper mounted on canvas, 75 11/16 x 35 7/8 in. (192.2 x 91 cm). Estimate on request.

CHRISTIE'S 1766

CHRISTIE'S

Principal auctioneer: Christopher Burge #761543

images and the loopy, logorrheic, sometimes menacing texts that accrue around them without really offering any explanations. / Drawings from the sixties exemplifying the so-called Capitalist Realism that Polke and Gerhard Richter came up with as a German answer to Pop; at once elegant and slapdash, they are peppered with dumb/clever jokes that are probably funnier if you speak the language. Through Oct. 14. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

KIKI SMITH—A mighty impressive show. There are several body images—both human and animal, in wax, bronze, pewter, paper, and fibreglass—and some nonfigurative pieces as well. "Ice Man," an eight-foot-tall male form in translucent fibreglass, looms like an angel, high on the back wall. Twenty-seven cast-bronze sculptures of dead crows litter the floor, telling a story that fascinates us even though we don't know quite what it is. Through Oct. 21. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

CHRIS WILDER—"Chill Out," a multimedia installation by a young Los Angeles artist, consisting of aluminum-foil wallpaper, silver "paintings" made of Mylar and other materials, turquoise synthetic carpet, a fluffy white throw pillow, and scattered books (writings of Marcel Duchamp, "Beyond Good and Evil," "UFOs in Space," etc.). Ambient music contributes to the spacey lounge atmosphere. The rather convoluted press release informs us that Wilder is obsessed with extraterrestrials. Through Oct. 21. (Merians, 76 Greene St.)

GROUP SHOW—Upstairs, a suitably lean, terse retrospective of Arte Povera. Three of the movement's founders—Luciano Fabro, Mario Merz, and Pino Pascali—are represented with one work each. Fabro's "Efeso," a massive block of snow-white marble hanging from the ceiling on steel cables, is particularly powerful. Downstairs, " 'monument' for V. Tatlin," a key Dan Flavin work from 1967, shines on. (Are these the original fluorescent tubes? What happens when they burn out?) Through Oct. 28. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

"WOMEN ON THE VERGE (FLUXUS AND NOT)"—A rumination on the reasons that recent examples of the sixties anti-movement are considered just Fluxus, and not neo- or post-, through works by Alison Knowles, Carolee Schneeman, Yoko Ono, Yayoi Kusama, Rona Pondick, and others. Through Oct. 21. (Wimmer, 560 Broadway.)

"PIERCED HEARTS AND TRUE LOVE: A CENTURY OF DRAWINGS FOR TATTOOS"—In addition to hundreds of contemporary drawings and historical flash, this show offers acetate stencils, photographs, tattoo-parlor signs, tools, and paraphernalia. Among the artists represented are Sailor Jerry Collins, Horiyoshi II, Stoney St. Clair, Dainty Dotty, and Charlie Malta. Through Nov. 11. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**CHUCK AGRO**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. Through Nov. 11. . . . **KEITH COVENTRY**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. Through Nov. 4. . . . **PETER DUDEK** and **GORDON VOISEY**, Patrick Callery, 66 Greene St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **OWEN GRAY**, Blue Mountain, 121 Wooster St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon; through Oct. 18. . . . **GLENN LIGON**, Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through Nov. 4. . . . **CATHERINE MURPHY**, Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. Through Nov. 11. . . . **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through Oct. 21.

OTHER VENUES

"ROBERT MOSES AND THE SHAPING OF NEW YORK"—Depending on your point of view, Moses was either the Master Builder, enabling our city to fulfill its twentieth-century potential, or the Power Broker, a ruthless autocrat who valued concrete and asphalt over nature. This show examines, through models, renderings, photographs, audio and video footage, and more, the ways that he shaped the city. Through Dec. 8. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St.)

"SURREALISM IN EXILE, 1938-47"—Letters, photographs, works on paper, and press clippings documenting the Parisian Surrealists' wartime emigration to New York and Mexico. Through Oct. 27. (La Maison Française, New York University, 16 Washington Mews. Closed Saturdays.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S—Nearly five hundred lots of English and Continental furniture and decorative art works from the corporate collection of Ralph Lauren go to the highest bidders on Oct. 11. Also this week: porcelain (Oct. 11); English furniture without the Lauren pedigree (Oct. 12); and rococo, neoclassical, and Regency silver (Oct. 17). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S—On Oct. 11, the house offers objects from the collection of the late Countess Elsie McNeill Lee Gozzi, including a selection of gowns produced by the Venetian firm of Fortuny (which she directed for many years); on Oct. 14, furnishings and art works from the estate of Mildred Hilson. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1119.)

FIFTH AVENUE ART AND ANTIQUES SHOW—Twenty-five high-end dealers offer furniture, paintings, and works of decorative art. (Ukrainian Institute, Fifth Ave. at 79th St. 249-4865. Oct. 11-16.)

INTERNATIONAL FINE ART AND ANTIQUE DEALERS SHOW—Seventy-eight dealers from Europe and America proffer paintings, drawings, and sculptures from the fourteenth century to the twentieth. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Oct. 13-19. For information, call 382-0969.)

ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA ANTIQUES SHOW—Something for everyone, even for those without bottomless pockets. (Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-3588. Oct. 13-15. . . . **NOTE:** A shuttle bus will run between this show and the one at the 7th Regiment Armory.)

ARTS OF PACIFIC ASIA SHOW—A must-check-it-out fair, new this year, for connoisseurs of Pacific and Southeast Asian art. (26th Street Armory, Lexington Ave. at 26th St. Oct. 13-15.)

METROPOLITAN ANTIQUES—A show of Victoriana. (110 W. 19th St. 463-0200. Oct. 13-15.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

EUGÈNE ATGET (1857-1927) and **WALKER EVANS** (1903-75)—A dry, intermittently compelling exhibit of fifty works, with several very fine juxtapositions. The selection—of a few interiors and public sculptures, and many architectural studies and street scenes—suffers from a lack of variety, especially in the Atgets. But there is plenty of evidence of both artists' devotion to documentation, clarity, and directness. Through Nov. 25. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

HANS BELLMER (1902-75)—The German Surrealist's photographic activity was sporadic. Besides the well-known doll studies, he had only two other subjects—his lovers Nora Mitrani (1946) and Unica Zurn (1958)—and his explicit nudes of them are on view, along with a selection of drawings. Through Oct. 21. (Ubu, 16 E. 78th St.)

BILL BURKE—Black-and-white Polaroids, processed on the spot and often damaged by poor conditions, taken during trips to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. Through Nov. 4. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM (1883-1976)—A survey of her long, prolific career, including portraits, figures, landscapes, cityscapes, and flowers. Through Nov. 4. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

SALLY MANN—Recent photographs of the artist's family, in which the rural Virginia landscape assumes a prominent role. Through Nov. 4. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

RICHARD MISRACH / HAROLD EDGERTON (1903-90)—In the latest series from his desert explorations, Misrach looks up into the sky and comes away with expansive—sometimes riveting—fields of color. / "Acts of Destruction," the fascinating effects of arrows, bullets, hammers, and explosions on innocent balloons, playing cards, and telephone books. Both shows through Oct. 21. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

TINA MODOTTI (1896-1942)—Street photographs, still-lifes with puppets, and other works made in Mexico between 1923 and 1929, which reveal a unique marriage of political consciousness and formalist aesthetics. Through Nov. 4. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St.)

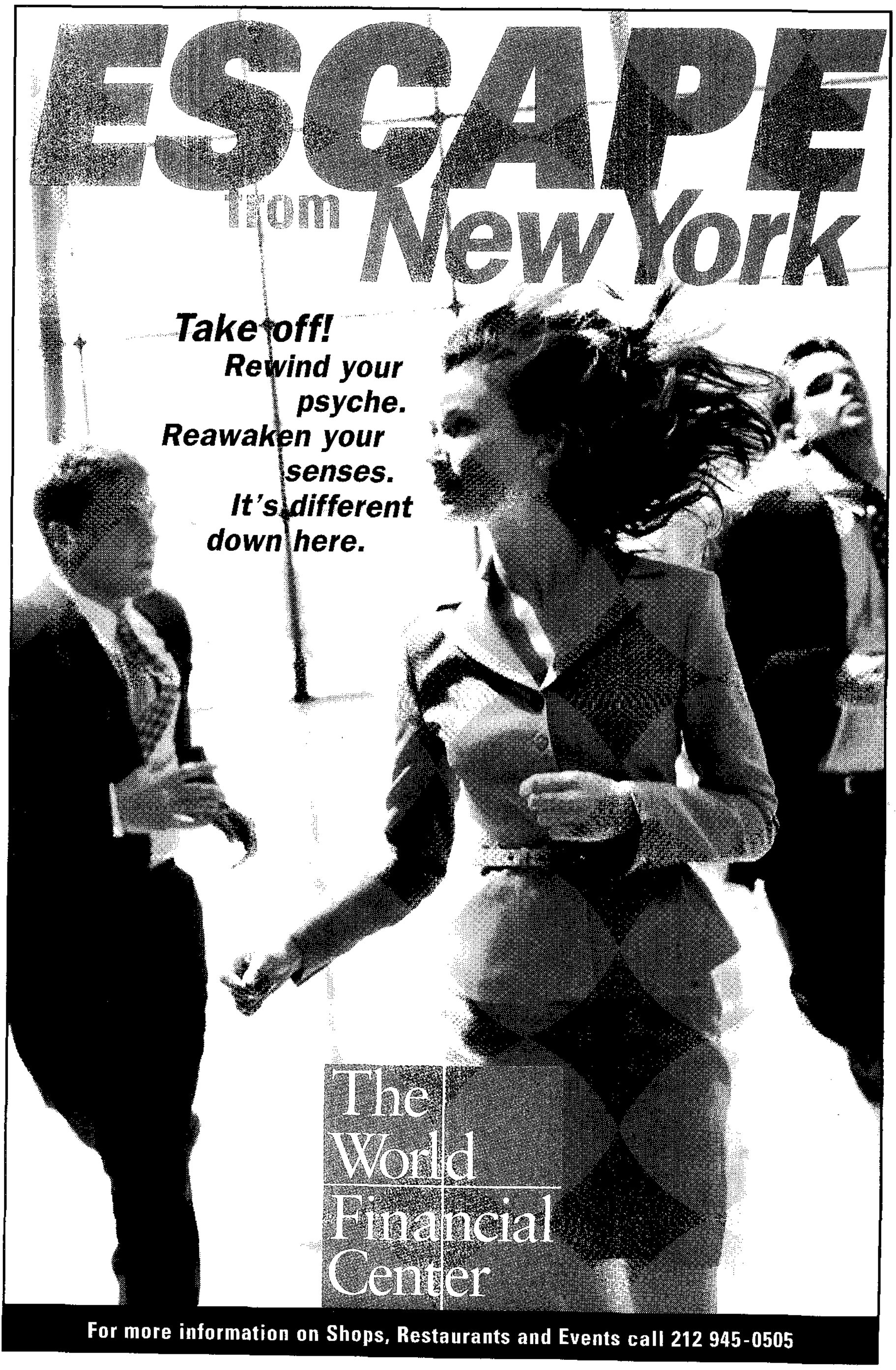
"UP/DOWN: VARIED VIEWPOINTS"—The subject from above or below, by Kertész, Coburn, Strand, Abbott, Kuniyoshi, Callahan, and others. Through Nov. 30. (Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St., fourth floor. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Feeling the Spirit: Searching the World for the People of Africa," twenty years of photographs by *Times* staff photographer Chester Higgins, Jr. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Street and prison scenes and images of violence in Bogota, Columbia, by Bastienne Schmidt. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"The Garden of Earthly Delights: Photographs by Edward Weston and Robert Mapplethorpe." Still-lifes, nudes, and portraits, hung side by side in comparative groupings. Through Nov. 26. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**FRANK GOHLKE**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **FRANK HORVAT**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. Through Oct. 21. . . . **JUDY LINN**, Feature, 76 Greene St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **MARGARET MORTON**, Lowinsky, 578 Broadway. Through Oct. 31. . . . **ALEXANDER RODCHENKO**, Schickler, 52 E. 76th St. Through Oct. 31. . . . **WILLY RONIS**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through Oct. 28. . . . **LORNA SIMPSON**, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through Nov. 11. . . . **BOYD WEBB**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through Oct. 21.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum SoHo.)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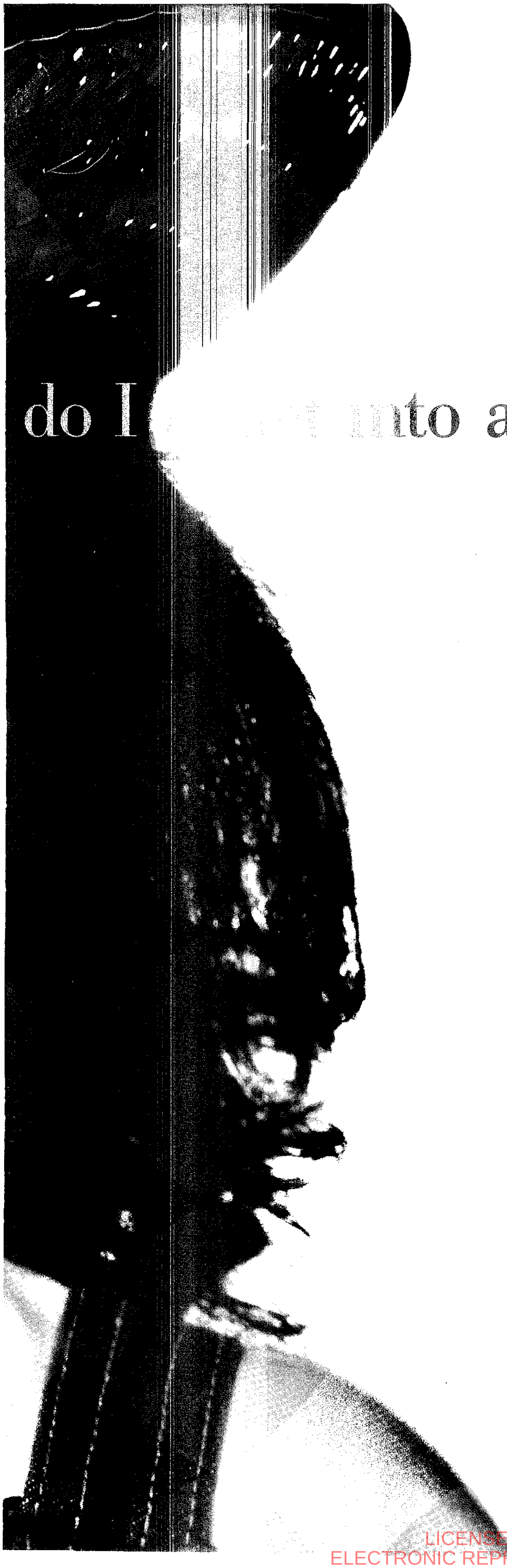

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**CARMEN,** with Denyce Graves, Barbara Frittoli, Richard Margison, and Sergei Leiferkus; conducted by John Fiore. (Oct. 11 at 8 and Oct. 14 at 1.) . . . **AIDA,** with Nina Rautio, Dolora Zajick, Kristján Jóhannsson, and Timothy Noble; Christian Badea. (Oct. 12 and Oct. 17 at 8.) . . . **OTELLO,** with Renée Fleming, Plácido Domingo, and James Morris; James Levine. (Oct. 13 and Oct. 16 at 8.) . . . **DON GIOVANNI,** with Sharon Sweet, Carol Vaness, Hei-Kyung Hong, Frank Lopardo, Christopher Robertson, and Bryn Terfel; Mr. Levine. (Oct. 14 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**LA BOHÈME.** (Oct. 11 at 8.) . . . **DON GIOVANNI.** (Oct. 13 and Oct. 17 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA.** (Oct. 14 at 1:30.) . . . **TURANDOT.** (Oct. 14 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN.** (Oct. 15 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—The Estonian conductor Neeme Järvi leads two works by his compatriot Eino Tamberg—his Concerto Grosso (written in 1956) and his "Celebration Fanfare for the United Nations 50th Anniversary" (a première)—as well as Grieg's "Norwegian Dances" (Op. 35, as arranged for orchestra by Hans Sitt), Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" (featuring pianist Andrei Gavrilov), and a suite from Tchaikovsky's "The Snow Maiden." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 12, Oct. 14, and Oct. 17, all at 8, and Oct. 13 at 2. . . . **NOTE:** At press time, the possibility of a musicians' strike loomed. Ticket buyers should check the status of these concerts before the scheduled performances.)

Concert Royal—James Richman leads his period-instrument group in works by Vivaldi (his G-Minor Concerto for Two Cellos and his motet "In Furore") and Bach (his Sixth "Brandenburg" Concerto and his Cantata No. 199). Julianne Baird is the featured soprano. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Janáček Chorus and New Amsterdam Singers—The two choirs—one from the Czech Republic, the other based here—offer a varied program. (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Central Park W. at 65th St. Oct. 12 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Chanticleer—The men's chamber choir offers music by Andrea Gabrieli, Poulenc, Chen Yi, and Bernard Rands, among others. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 13 at 8.)

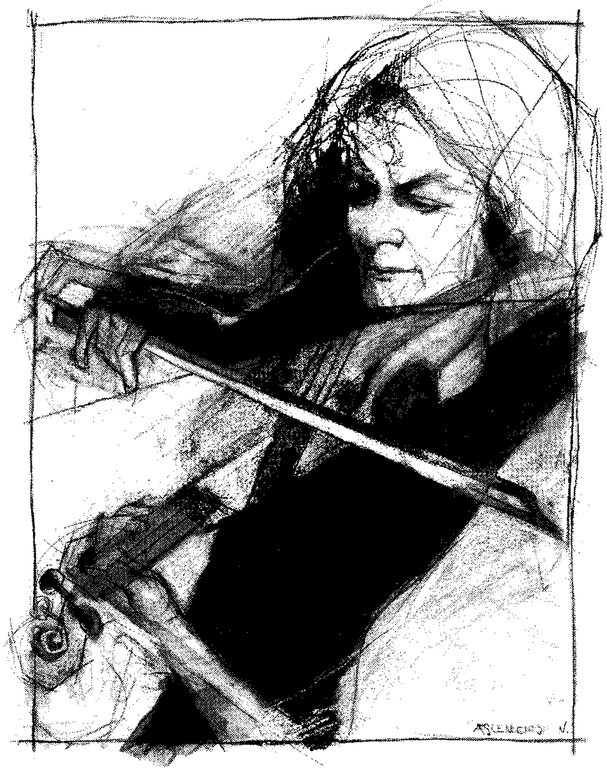
Manhattan School of Music Symphony—Paul Paray (1886-1979) was a conductor acclaimed especially for his interpretations of colorful French scores. Though his work as a composer is less known today, he achieved some success in that field as well; in 1911, scarcely out of conservatory, he was awarded the coveted Prix de Rome. In this concert, James Paul will conduct Paray's Symphony No. 1, on a program that also includes Laurent Petitgirard's "Le Marathon" and Debussy's "Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune" and "La Mer." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 13 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducts a program crafted to explore musical byways of the Enlightenment: Haydn's Symphony No. 55 and C-Major Violin Concerto (with Cho-Liang Lin) and Mozart's "Masonic Funeral Music" (K. 477) and C-Major Concertone (K. 190, with Mr. Lin and violinist Mela Tenenbaum). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 14 at 7. . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Kapp will deliver a lecture about the program at 5.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Gounod's Symphony No. 2, plus three twentieth-century American works: David Diamond's "Heroic Piece," Bloch's "Four Episodes," and Barber's Violin Concerto (with Joshua Bell). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 14 at 8. . . . ¶ Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Oct. 15 at 5.)

Met Orchestra—James Levine conducts Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder" (with bass-baritone Bryn Terfel) and Symphony No. 6. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 15 at 3.)

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande—The Swiss orchestra, conducted by Armin Jordan, offers two programs that stress music by its Gallic neighbors. Oct. 15 at 3: Debussy's "Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune" and "Ibéria," as well as Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (featuring Christian Zacharias) and "Daphnis et Chloé" Suite No. 2. . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 7:30: Chausson's "Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer" (with soprano Felicity Lott), Dukas's "La Péri," and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite (by a Russian, to be sure, but written for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes to première in their 1910 Paris season). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.)



Iona Brown, with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, at Carnegie Hall.

I Musici de Montréal—Yuli Turovsky conducts the chamber orchestra in Nino Rota's Concerto for Strings, Jose Evangelista's "Airs d'Espagne," Dvořák's B-Major Nocturne for Strings (Op. 40), and Bartók's Divertimento (1939), and doubles as soloist in Gaspar Cassadó's arrangement (for cello and orchestra) of Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 3 (K. 447). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Oct. 16 at 8.)

Norwegian Chamber Orchestra—Performing Magnar Åm's "Study on a Norwegian Hymn," Grieg's "Two Elegiac Melodies," Vaughan Williams's "The Lark Ascending" (featuring the ensemble's director, Iona Brown, as violin soloist), Stravinsky's Concerto in D, and Mozart's Symphony No. 29. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 17 at 8.)

RECITALS

Heidi Grant Murphy and Kevin Murphy—The wife-and-husband soprano and pianist offer songs by Purcell, Mozart, Brahms, Rodrigo, Strauss, and Debussy, as well as the première of Marc Neikrug's "Pueblo Children's Songs." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 13 at 8.)

Vera Galupe-Borszkh—The drag diva appears in recital, without her usual accomplices from La Gran Scena Opera Company. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Oct. 14 at 8.)

Blow, Ye Winds—Mordechai Rechtman conducts his arrangements for twelve wind instruments of chorale preludes by Bach, in a program that also includes Dvořák's Serenade (Op. 44). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Oct. 15 at noon.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, Dohnányi's C-Major Serenade for String Trio, and Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" (with narrator Anthony Heald). (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. Oct. 15 at 2. For information about tickets, call 212-840-7470. . . . **NOTE:** The concert will be repeated on Oct. 18 at 8, at Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800.)

The Western Wind—The vocal sextet that inaugurated the Music Before 1800 series, twenty seasons ago, returns to take a tour through the history of the part-song in America, from the arrival of the English at Jamestown (in 1607, with all manner of sacred and secular songs in tow) to the brink of the Civil War. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Oct. 15 at 4.)

Salon Soirées—Violinist Ariel Shamai, cellist Iris Regev, and pianist Ilan Rechtman offer three piano trios by Mozart. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Oct. 15 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Maurizio Pollini—In the second installment of his seven-concert traversal of Beethoven's piano sonatas, the pianist performs the three sonatas of Opus 10, the C-Minor Sonata (Op. 13, the "Pathétique"), and the two sonatas of Opus 14. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 16 at 7:30.)

François LeRoux—In his New York début recital, the French baritone offers *mélodies* by Poulenc, Debussy, Ravel, Gounod, Lalo, Duparc, and Hahn. Pianist Jeff Cohen assists. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Oct. 16 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5030.)

Alan Gampel—Pianist, performing Bach's Variations "in the Italian Style" (BWV 989), Schumann's "Carnaval," Stravinsky's "Three Movements from 'The Firebird' " (as transcribed by Guido Agosti), and a generous helping of Chopin (including his Fourth Ballade). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Oct. 17 at 8.)

Ensemble 21—The contemporary-music group explores works by Babbitt, Takemitsu, and a host of others. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 17 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

JEFFREY SIEGEL: Pianist, in a talk-and-play Mozart evening. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 11 at 8.) . . . **HEIDI EMMERT:** Organist, in her New York début recital. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Oct. 12 at 8.) . . . **RICHARD STOLTZMAN:** The clarinettist and several colleagues perform a family concert. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 14 at 2.) . . . **YALE MUSIC SPECTRUM:** Chamber music and songs by Mozart and Webern. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 14 at 8:30.) . . . **NEW YORK CITY GAY MEN'S CHORUS CHAMBER CHOIR.** (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 14 at 8.) . . . **BROOKLYN FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC:** Works for strings: a quartet by Haydn, a quintet by Mozart, and a sextet by Brahms. (Lepercq Space, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 15 at 3.) . . . **WINSLOW BROWNING:** Classical guitarist, with pianist Michael Skelly. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Oct. 15 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

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SOME HOMES AWAY FROM HOME

The classic comforts of home—a real garden, a kitchen with counters, a quiet place to read, room to turn around—are not so easy to come by in the city. Luckily, in New York you can always go out.

Coffee to Stay—Home is a place where you can drink a lot of coffee and they don't kick you out. Truly committed procrastinators should check out the crowded Hungarian Pastry Shop (1030 Amsterdam Ave., at 111th St.), a Columbia hangout where you can sip, nibble, and do nothing all day. Probably more dissertations are not being written here than at any other collegiate address in the Americas. The tiny tables are strewn with the weight of academia—a Xeroxed article on the Seiberg-Wetten equation, a paperback edition of Chrétien de Troyes's "Erec et Enide"—all set aside to make space for Linzer tortes, mocha éclairs, and various blends of coffee and foam served in plain white china cups. Free refills, and one tiny bathroom covered with earnest graffiti that's worth the wait.

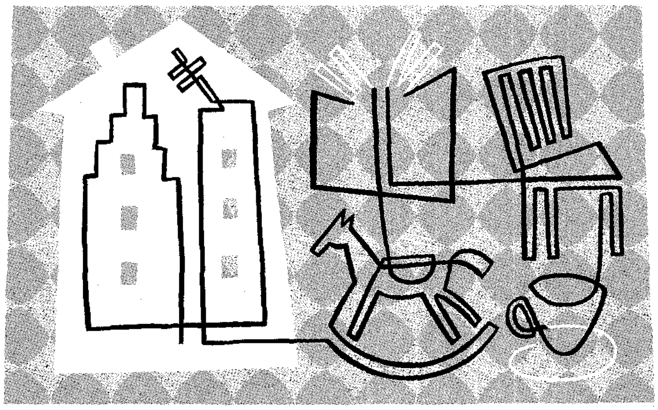
Where the Tart Is—It's Saturday afternoon, and students in Bonnie Lee Black's antipasti class at Peter Kump's School of Culinary Arts (307 E. 92nd St.; 410-4601) are gathered around a stove as sunlight floods through the ceiling-high windows and an overhead fan moves the scent of baking focaccia around the room. "You can use this technique at school, but probably not at home," Black says, accidentally flipping several fragrant slices of red bell pepper out of her sautée pan and onto the floor. "At home you'd have to clean it up." To a lot of the students, that's the point: it's sort of like home, but better. The kitchens in this former carriage factory are a lot bigger than yours, and they're stocked with a surplus of utensils which apartment dwellers sentenced to galley kitchens can only dream about. (There's another branch at 50 W. 23rd St.)

Insider Playing—Has your playroom become a prison? Make your parents take you to PlaySpace (2473 Broadway, at 92nd St.; 769-2300), a fantasyland where the weather is always nice, pigeons aren't invited, and the peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches have no crusts. When you arrive, yell "Wow," then race to the dress-up stage and don a princess dress (accessorize with a visored helmet, a breastplate, and a vampire cape). Stomp up the steps, crawl through the Plexiglas tunnel, come down the spiral slide. Scream for no apparent reason. Stage a drama involving a sheep and a whale at the hand-puppet theatre. Go to the beach area, ignore all the shovels and pails, take your socks off and fill them with sand; leave them there. Ride a rocking spaceship. Drive a bus. Operate a crane. Lose track of time. When your parents act ready to leave, hide in the sandbox cave. (Also at 1504 Third Ave., at 85th St.)

The Inn Thing—"Ninety per cent of our clients are New Yorkers," says John Simoudis, of the Inn at Irving Place, a quiet Victorian haven whose twelve highly individual rooms the innkeeper modestly calls "not cookie-cutterish." From the sitting room of the Madame Olenska Suite, it is impossible to detect the bay window converted, by a generous application of blue brocade, into a discreet bedside smooching nook. The house has other secrets (like the hidden passageway connecting the third-story Irving Rooms to the Washington Suite downstairs), and it is hard not to be charmed by the fin-de-siècle luxury: the bronze nude on the newel post, the antique beds with marquetry headboards, the see-through Wedgwood cups on the breakfast tray. Of course, all this "Age of Innocence" enchantment comes at a tariff that goes down easier if you're a robber baron. (56 Irving Pl. 533-4600.)

Tome Away from Home—Like a fashionable upper-crust household, the New York Society Library has moved uptown since its founding, in 1754 (its original digs were down on Wall Street, in the old City Hall). But you don't have to be in the *Social Register* to gain entrance to this elegant 1917 Italianate town house at 53 East 79th Street (288-6900). Members can roam nine floors of stacks, borrow from the collection, finish their novels in the private studies and reading rooms, or while the day away in the cushy periodicals lounge upstairs. But any old Joe can walk right in to read in the research room.

East Village Green—Two words separate Manhattan dwellers from the rest of the country: back yard. On the Lower East Side, where one generally settles for an aspidistra near the airshaft, it's startling to happen on something as yardlike and comfortable as the 6th Street and Avenue B Garden, with its hundred-odd plots of morning glories, runner beans, beefsteak tomatoes, red peppers, black-eyed Susans, etc. The garden is nominally for members only, but the gate is almost always open, for free concerts, readings, yoga classes, compost workshops, and jabber, throughout the growing season.



LAURA LJUNGKVIST

Bar Some—Simply showing up at Elsie Rennie's Oke-Doke Bar (307 E. 84th St.)—a slightly tottery late-night establishment in a Yorkville tenement—doesn't necessarily mean that its eighty-year-old proprietor is going to let you in. And if she does open the door for you (after inspecting you through the lace curtains), she's not going to drop everything she's doing just because you've arrived. Don't take admittance lightly and go abusing your privileges, either. "Would you do that at home?" she'll demand of the night owl who gets sozzled and then treats the Oke-Doke like some joint. "This is a home bar," she says, "not just some place you walk in and walk out." With its Tyrolean décor, backbar lined with photos and stacks of mail, and antiquated cash register, her place looks like your grandmother's house might if she had a bar in it. And if she did, she'd probably treat you exactly the same way. "You feel sick?," Ms. Rennie asks, pouring a shot of Jägermeister, an herbal digestive that is a favorite of hers. "Drink this. It's like magic." You do, and she's right. You feel all better.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Spell That Again, Please—Norwegian emissaries arrive on our shores as part of Norwegian Visions, a festival of cultural exchange. Oct. 12 at 4: Curators Per Bj. Boym, Øivind Storm Bjerke, Arne Eggum, Gerd Woll, and Nils Messel discuss the work of the painters Edvard Munch, Harald Sohlberg, and their circle in a symposium on turn-of-the-century Norwegian art. (National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 369-4880.) . . . ¶ Oct. 14 at 9: Two races—the five-kilometre Norway Run, open to all runners, and Grete's Great Gallop, a women's half-marathon honoring the Norwegian runner Grete Waitz—start on opposite sides of the 72nd St. traverse in Central Park. To register for either event, call the New York Road Runners Club, at 860-4455. . . . ¶ "When Cod Was King," an exhibition comparing codfishing cultures in Norway and North America, features a codding boat, embroidered codfishers' finery, waders, gaiters, dried and salted cod, Canadian codfish crafts, and so on. (South Street Seaport Museum, 209-213 Water St. 748-8600. Through April.)

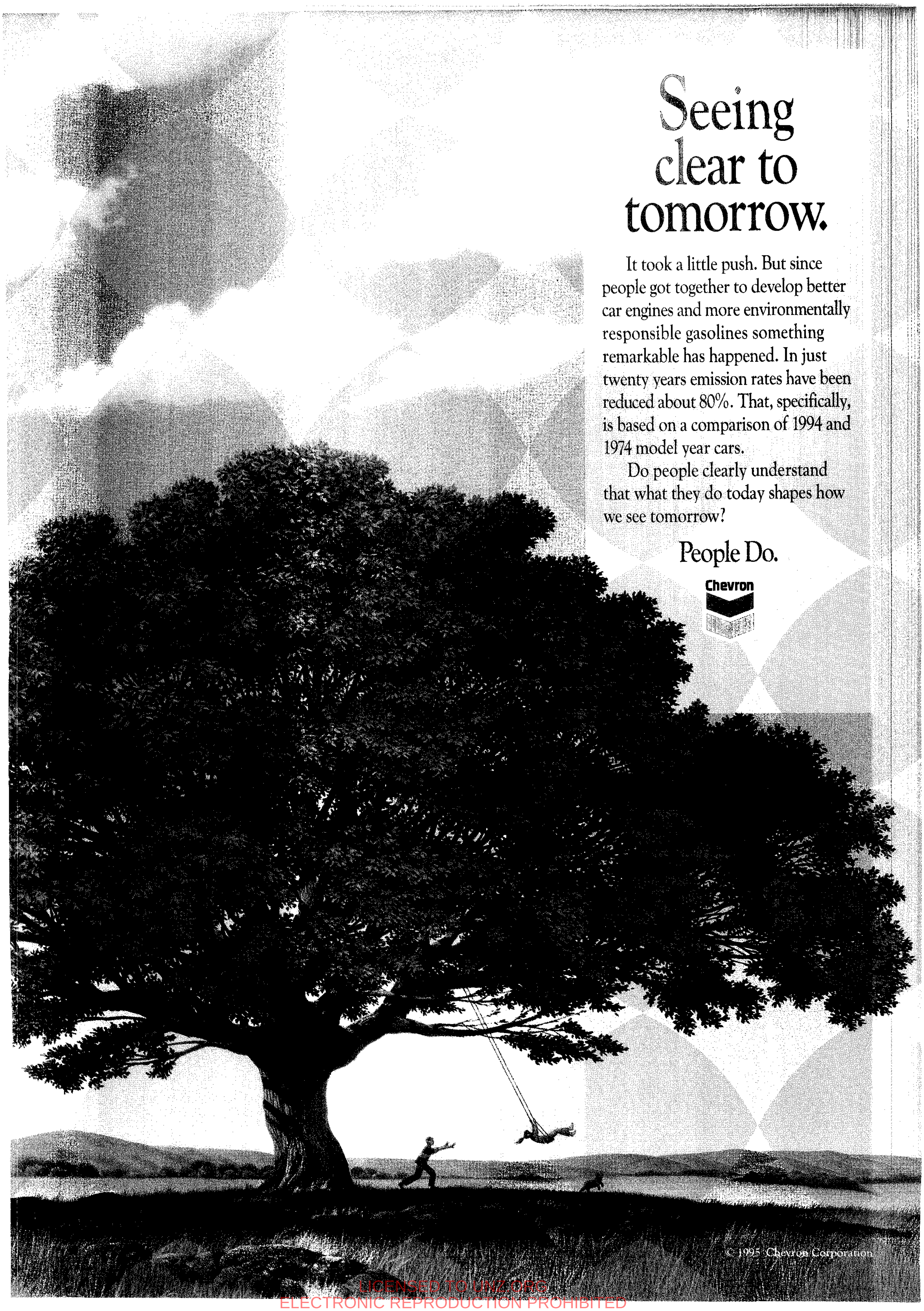
Double-Axel Season—The Rockefeller Center ice rink opens for skating on Monday. Rentals are available for those who like to skate in front of thousands of strangers taking photos. At 12:30 and 7, current national figure-skating champion Nicole Bobek will perform, along with Tara Lipinski and Emily Hughes, thirteen and six years old respectively. (Fifth Ave. at 50th St. No tickets necessary for the performances.)

Open Houses—On Saturday, Artwalk NY presents sixteen separate tours of galleries and studios in SoHo, Chelsea, Tribeca, and the East Village. More than sixty artists, including Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Komar & Melamid, and Jane Dickson, will open their work spaces to chat—and, in some cases, to give hands-on demonstrations—during forty-minute studio visits. (Oct. 14, from 10 to 6. For information about the tours, which include five stops each, call 964-5900, ext. 118.)

Readings—Oct. 12 at 7: Richard Howard introduces poets Cathleen Calbert, Jody Gladding, John Koethe, and Susan Musgrave, who will read from the selections of their work included in "The Best American Poetry 1995." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call the Academy of American Poets, at 274-0343.) . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 7: Short-fiction writers Junot Díaz, Tom Paine, and Sara Powers read a story each. (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Oct. 12 at 8:30 A.M.: Publisher Harold Evans will host a breakfast chat about espionage, with William Safire, Robert Vaughn, and Caspar Weinberger, among others. (mad.61, 10 E. 61st St. 940-7480.) . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 4: Trumpeter Aaron Flagg leads a five-piece jazz combo in a demonstration of riffs, breaks, call and response, and vamps. (New York Public Library, George Bruce Branch, 518 W. 125th St. No tickets necessary. Repeated on Oct. 14 at 2.) . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 8: Historian Starr Goode discusses images of Sheela-na-gig, a bald and naked female figure of highly exaggerated sexual characteristics hidden among the carvings on façades of medieval Celtic churches. (Open Center, 83 Spring St. 219-2527.) . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 6: Herbert Mitgang of the *Times* moderates a discussion with former war correspondents Walter Bernstein, Philip Hamburger, and Helen Kirkpatrick, about front-line reporting during the Second World War. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

"All the untidy activity continues, / awful but cheerful"—This Sunday, the induction of William Cullen Bryant and Elizabeth Bishop into the Poets' Corner at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine will be celebrated at Vespers, at 7. William Jay Smith and Richard Wilbur will read selections from Bryant's poetry; Frank Bidart and Elizabeth Hardwick will read from Bishop's. (The quotation above, from Bishop's "The Bight," is to be inscribed on her stone.)



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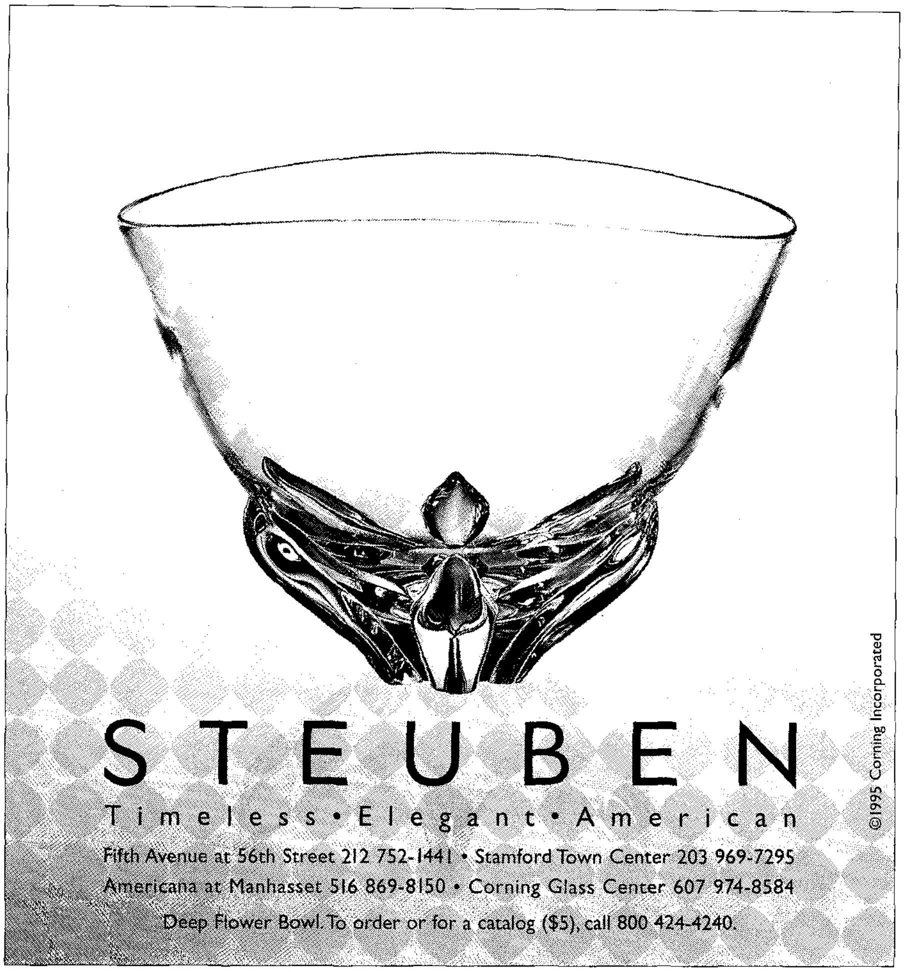
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Devil in a Blue Dress—Denzel Washington plays Easy Rawlins, the hero of Walter Mosley's popular detective novels. The action takes place in 1948; Easy, an unemployed veteran, reluctantly agrees to help a shady-looking white man (Tom Sizemore) locate a woman who may be lying low in one of L.A.'s black neighborhoods. The movie, written and directed by Carl Franklin ("One False Move"), is the most enjoyable private-eye film in a long time: a modest, skillful, unfussy genre piece that tells an exciting story and lets its more serious concerns remain just below the surface, gently complicating the smooth-flowing rhythms of the narrative. When the picture is over, the details of the mystery fade pretty quickly, but the smoky, after-hours mood lingers. And although the film is full of sly perceptions about race relations, Franklin treats everything matter-of-factly: the ironies sneak up on us slowly, like the huge, harsh Southern California sun rising on the groggy survivors of a long sleepless night. Also with Jennifer Beals, Jernard Burks, Albert Hall, Terry Kinney, and Don Cheadle (who does a virtuoso comic turn as Easy's homicidal sidekick, Mouse).—T.R. (10/2/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers—The latest chapter shows why he did it—maybe. Directed by Joe Chappelle. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

How to Make an American Quilt—A ragbag of love stories, from 1860 to the present, starring Winona Ryder, Ellen Burstyn, Anne Bancroft, Kate Nelligan, and Alfre Woodard. Directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse. Written by Jane Anderson, from the 1991 novel by Whitney Otto. (34th St. East, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Metro Cinema.)

Kicking and Screaming—Noah Baumbach's first movie focusses on the indecisive, enervated months that four college buddies spend together after graduation—clinging to old habits (crossword puzzles, trivia games), living near or on campus—before they go their separate ways. What finally makes them move on, and sets this film apart from other slacker comedies, is the women they're attracted to: risk-taking students who are more capable than their men of standing on their own. Baumbach doesn't write grand speeches; he lets details and repartee carry the movie's emotional weight, and when it finally dawns on his characters that, even in postgrad limbo, life has a way of pushing you along, there's nothing self-congratulatory about the discovery. The picture has a lovely, understated autobiographical lilt. The perfect ensemble cast includes Josh Hamilton, Olivia d'Abo, Parker Posey, and the reigning king of independent-film ennui, Eric Stoltz, as the seen-it-all barkeep.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center.)

Kids—Larry Clark's film follows some New York City teen-agers through a day and a night of largely self-destructive activity; these kids seem to be wandering in total darkness. Although the movie will undoubtedly be received as a wake-up call, a sobering report on a lost generation, what's fascinating—and unsettling—about it is Clark's unmistakable admiration for the recklessness of the young. The obsessive, ardent gaze he turns on his subjects as they stumble toward oblivion has a strangely aestheticizing effect; he can't help turning these wasted, aimless kids into icons of the beautiful and damned. Screenplay by Harmony Korine (who was nineteen when he wrote it).—T.R. (7/31/95) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Month by the Lake—A movie that captures the spontaneous magic that can happen on a special trip, when you meet people and agree to collaborate on an adventure, knowing nothing of the lives they have left be-

Noah Baumbach's "Kicking and Screaming."

GEOFFREY PARKER

hind. The setting is Lake Como in the nineteen-thirties. Vanessa Redgrave is amazing as Miss Bentley, a spinster photographer who has travelled to Italy to find love; the actress avoids all the repressed-schoolmarm clichés of the role and plays it as a loud, slightly infantile tomboy. Edward Fox is equally touching, and eccentric, as a lonely major. Trevor Bentham wrote the oddly suspenseful script, based on a novella by H. E. Bates; John Irvin directed. Also with Uma Thurman.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ 68th St. Playhouse; through Oct. 12.)

Moonlight and Valentino—The weepie is as archetypal a genre as the Western. There isn't much new in this story of a young poetry professor (Elizabeth Perkins) who calls on her ex-stepmother (Kathleen Turner), best friend (Whoopi Goldberg), and little sister (Gwyneth Paltrow) for comfort when her husband goes out jogging and gets flattened by a car, but at least everyone connected with the production is topnotch. Paltrow stands out as a confused bohemian virgin, and Jon Bon Jovi is surprisingly good as the soulful-eyed housepainter who brings Perkins' heart back from the dead. Ellen Simon adapted the script from her play; David Anspaugh directed.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Tower East, and Lincoln Square.)

Nadja—An eerie comedy written and directed by Michael Almereyda, based on the Dracula legend but updated and filmed in New York City. The story, which begins after Dr. Van Helsing (played with goofy charm by Peter Fonda) has killed Dracula, concerns his efforts to track down the vampire's twin children. It's intended as a flippant take on the monsters that hide inside dysfunctional families, but the uneven mix of eroticism and one-liners doesn't always work. Nadja, Dracula's daughter, is well played by Elina Löwensohn.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center.)

Persuasion—The young British director Roger Michell has made a Jane Austen movie that is never pretty and only occasionally charming; instead, it is troubled, astringent, and touched with melancholy—not unlike the novel. Amanda Root plays Anne Elliot, who once turned down Frederick Wentworth (Ciaran Hinds) and has regretted it ever since. They come together again—in the country, by the sea, and on the streets of Bath—and you can guess the outcome, but Michell somehow tenses a simple narrative into suspense. With Sophie Thompson as Anne's sister, Corin Redgrave as their monstrous father, and Fiona Shaw as the worldly wife of an admiral.—A.L. (9/25/95) (Paris.)

The Run of the Country—A teen-ager (Matt Keeslar) in County Cavan, Ireland, runs away from his stern father (Albert Finney) and falls in love with a young woman from northern Ireland (Victoria Smurfit). Directed by Peter Yates. Adapted by Shane Connaughton from his 1991 novel. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, and Baronet.)

Seven—The murders in David Fincher's serial-killer mystery are grisly tableaux, each artfully arranged to illustrate one of the seven deadly sins. This kind of self-conscious literary conceit can work if it's handled with a light, parodic touch, but the movie's clammy design and glum cinematography try to persuade us that what we're watching is a serious meditation on the nature of evil. The police detectives are Morgan Freeman, as weary old Somerset, and Brad Pitt, as brash young Mills; Freeman, with his immense dignity and authority, manages to keep his head above water, but Pitt goes under.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through Oct. 12.)

Showgirls—Director Paul Verhoeven and screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, who last worked together on "Basic Instinct," tell the story of Nomi (Elizabeth Berkley), a young woman who goes to Las Vegas determined to climb the greasy pole of success. In an unusual career move, she ends up actually *licking* the pole—just one of the highlights of her dance routine at the Cheetah Club. We soon find her ascending to the heights of the Stardust, an altogether classier joint (dry ice, gold costumes), where she arouses the pleasant lust of Zack (Kyle MacLachlan) and the furious lust of Cristal (Gina Gershon); these days, no Eszterhas script is complete without a dash of wandering sexuality. He and Verhoeven are like a couple of kids sniggering at a peepshow on 42nd Street—their movie is full of *really* rude words, plus women without their tops on! Berkley's acting début is a joy, if you can call it acting: she jumps up and down a lot to indicate excitement. Watching this picture is like surfing the soaps for a couple of hours. There's no use being offended, so you might as well have a good laugh.—A.L. (10/9/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Strange Days—The year 2000 is hours away, the streets of Los Angeles are erupting with civil strife, and Lenny Nero (Ralph Fiennes) is up to his stubble in bad news. Lenny records lives—every feeling and sensation—on disk; it's a scummy business, and it suddenly gets worse when he receives a couple of disks that appear to show police racism, rape, and murder. (The movie is like a mad fantasia on the Rodney King episode.) Enlisting the help of Max (Tom Sizemore) and Mace (Angela Bassett), Lenny sets out to crack the case. But for the director, Kathryn Bigelow, the case is mainly an excuse to let it rip. This is her loudest, most rebellious movie to date: she has shifted away from the sleek manner of "Blue Steel" and "Point Break" and arrived at a relentlessly wired style. Inspired by her excess, some of the actors head straight over the top. The worst offender is Juliette Lewis, unwatchable in the role of Lenny's old girlfriend. But Fiennes holds steady; his moody, lonely performance, especially in the beguiling first half hour, lends the story an air of calm despair. Screenplay by James Cameron and Jay Cocks.—A.L. (10/9/95) (Ziegfeld. . . . ¶ Mov-

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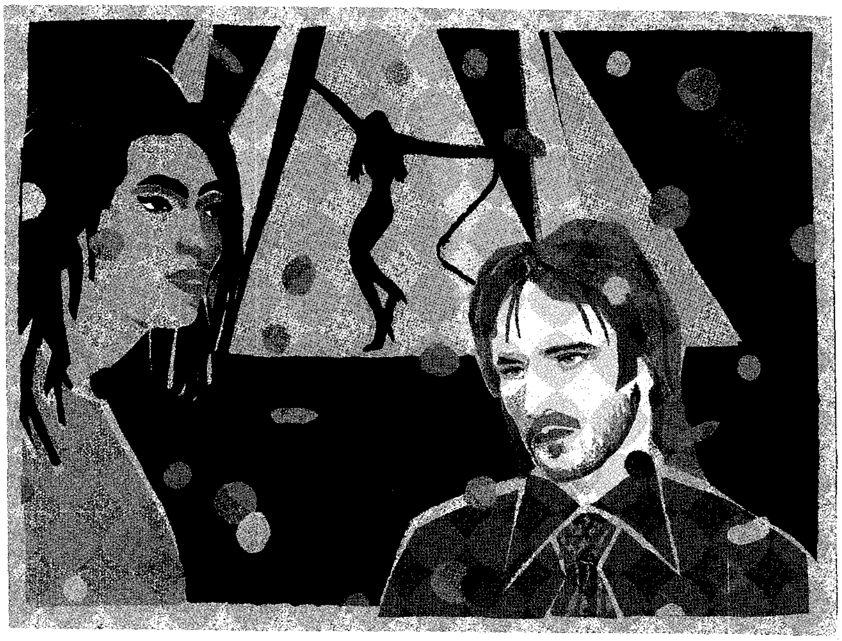
ieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency; starting Oct. 13.)

To Die For—Director Gus Van Sant's latest movie is his funniest, but also his least adventurous. Adapted by Buck Henry from Joyce Maynard's 1992 novel, it tells the story of Suzanne Stone (Nicole Kidman), a suburban nobody who, bored with her husband (Matt Dillon), decides to become a somebody in the world of television. She joins a local station, starts to shoot a documentary about three schoolkids, and gradually lures them into her web. The film is smartly structured, but Van Sant's touch is uncertain: the story's satirical bite begins to loosen as his camera lingers more and more on the plain, disaffected teen-agers. One of them is played by Joaquin Phoenix, whose brother River was so extraordinary in "My Own Private Idaho"; it's as though Van Sant longed to recapture the wayward, carnal atmosphere of the earlier movie but found himself locked in a smaller, more brittle project.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)



Kathryn Bigelow's "Strange Days."

MARK GAGNON

To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar—It may be a surprise to watch Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes, and John Leguizamo dress up in glowing silks, but it's nothing more than a surprise, and it doesn't last—the director, Beeban Kidron, has a tough time trying to mold the material into a dramatic shape. The bitchy threesome set off on a cross-country trip and pitch camp in a small Midwestern town, where they urge the locals to go a little wild. It's a pity that no one worked the same magic on the movie. Everything about it feels so safe, sedentary, and sexless that the leads might as well have worn gray suits.—A.L. (9/11/95) (Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Unstrung Heroes—Diane Keaton's film, about a boy who goes to live with his uncles in a time of crisis (his mother is dying), is based on sportswriter Franz Lidz's 1991 memoir; the script, by Richard LaGravenese, spins sentimental cotton candy around the experience. Keaton's style is fluid and detailed, and she gets lovely performances from her actors, particularly Maury Chaykin, as the neurotic uncle who clutters his nest with old newspapers and junk, and John Turturro, as the boy's sad, down-to-earth dad. In the end, though, the film is undone by its shaky premise that crazy people are more in touch with life than their rational counterparts. It tries too hard to make lunacy endearing.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Unzipped—A witty and fascinating look at the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi during the months leading up to his fall, 1994, show. Director Douglas Keeve and editor Paula Heredia capture the absurd amount of work that goes into the twenty-minute unveiling of a collection that consists largely of pink and orange fake furs. Mizrahi—warm if occasionally dictatorial—plays to the camera like a natural star. It's nice to see a behind-the-scenes documentary that isn't just out to expose warts. With Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Kate Moss, and other very familiar faces.—S.K. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Usual Suspects—A treat. Five criminals, ranging from petty to pro, are herded into a police lineup on suspicion of armed robbery. They walk, but not before joining forces to plan a new crime—a bright idea that soon darkens with treachery and ends in a bulk order of dead bodies. Director Bryan Singer and screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie somehow keep from getting lost in the spiralling plot, a game in which everyone—the good, the bad, and the audience—gets to play sucker. Singer's style may overheat now and then, but his cast, headed by Chazz Palminteri and Kevin Spacey, keeps things cool.—A.L. (8/14/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ East 85th Street; through Oct. 12.)

ALSO PLAYING

THE ADDICTION: Angelika Film Center. . . . **ANGUS:** Village East Cinemas. . . . **APOLLO 13** (reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95): Regency. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): 59th Street East Cinema and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **BATMAN FOREVER** (7/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BELLE DE JOUR:** Village East Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **BEYOND RANGOON** (8/21-28/95): Plaza. . . . **THE BIG GREEN:** Village East Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Lincoln Square. . . . **BRAVEHEART** (6/5/95): New York Twin and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **CANADIAN BACON:** Village East Cinemas and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **CASPER:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CLUELESS:** Movieland 8th Street Triplex and 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FREE WILLY 2: THE**

ADVENTURE HOME: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HACKERS:** 34th Street Showplace. . . . **THE INCREDIBLY TRUE ADVENTURE OF TWO GIRLS IN LOVE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **JEFFREY:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **KILIAN'S CHRONICLE:** Cinema Village. . . . **LIVING IN OBLIVION:** Quad Cinema. . . . **LORD OF ILLUSIONS:** Criterion Center. . . . **MORTAL KOMBAT:** Criterion Center. . . . **MUTE WITNESS:** Village East Cinemas and Angelika 57. . . . **THE NET** (8/7/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **NINE MONTHS** (7/24/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE POSTMAN:** Village East Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE PROPHECY:** Movieland 8th Street Triplex and Astor Plaza. . . . **SMOKE:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **STEAL BIG, STEAL LITTLE:** 19th Street East 6, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . **A WALK IN THE CLOUDS:** Cinema 3. . . . **WINGS OF COURAGE** (4/24/95): Lincoln Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th St.
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th St.
Plaza, 42 E. 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th St.
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St.
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12t St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd St.
Regency, B'way at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th St.
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way.
National Twin, B'way at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Bruce Diones, Pauline Kael, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

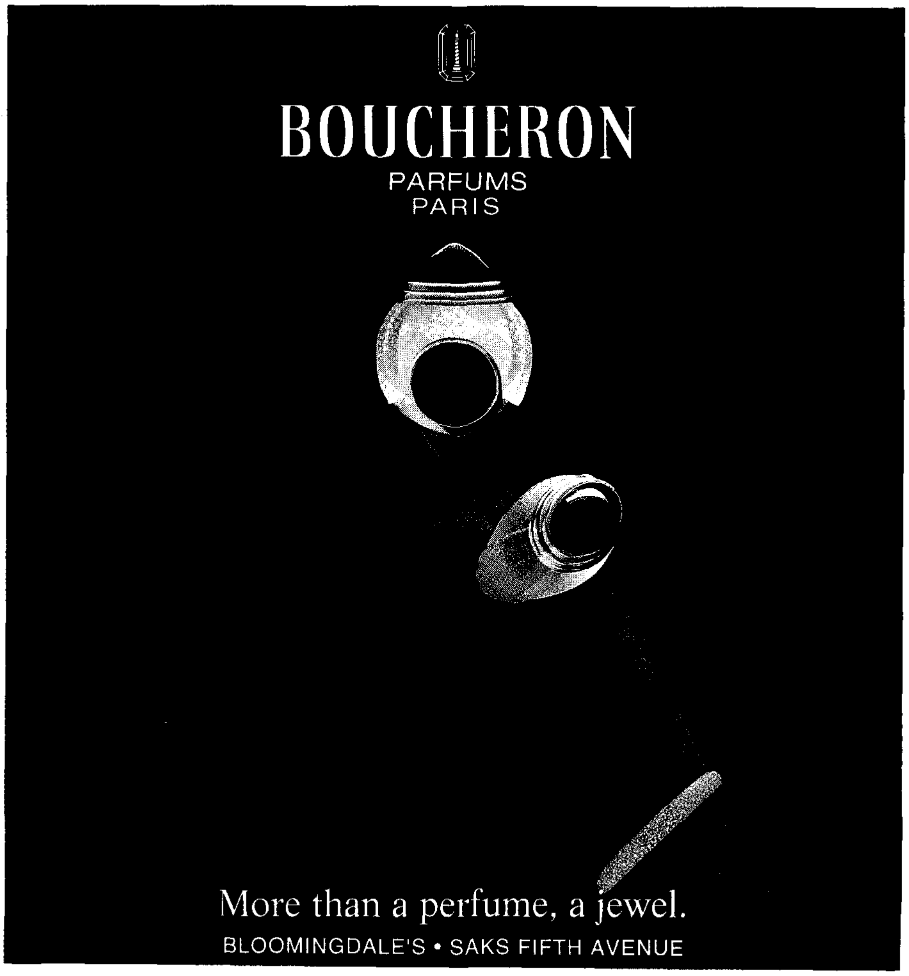
Clean, Shaven (1995)—A soulless, unlikable, and yet arresting film about a child murderer. The writer-director, Lodge H. Kerrigan, bleaches the color out of the poor rural areas that he shoots in and keeps the dialogue to a minimum. There's no plot; you just follow the killer (Peter Greene) around in his car until he's caught. Although the simultaneous tedium and creepiness suggest bad porn, there is something in the zombie-like performances, cold skies, and occasional skin gouging that gets to you.—B.D. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 14.)

The Good Fairy (1935)—Hired to sanitize one of Ferenc Molnár's lesser plays, Preston Sturges embroidered the whimsical comedy until it was almost worthy of the talents of Margaret Sullavan. She plays a naïve, unworldly orphan who becomes an usher in a movie theatre; she's so helplessly innocent that various men (Herbert Marshall, Frank Morgan, Reginald Owen) come to her aid, and their lives get turned upside down. William Wyler, who directed, has told the story of how he quarrelled with Margaret Sullavan at first. He took her out to dinner to make peace, and was so successful that they were married two weeks before the picture was finished.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 17.)

The Hours and Times (1991)—Christopher Münch's arty, wistful what-if? movie presumes that John Lennon (Ian Hart) and the Beatles' gay manager, Brian Epstein (David Angus), tested the emotional and erotic bounds of their friendship during a getaway to Barcelona in 1963. The cultured, selfless Epstein is a melancholy romantic besotted with his rude young rocker, who teases and finally crawls into bed with him (though what happens there is vague). Does this flirtation dance grow out of mutual love, or Lennon's I'll-try-anything spirit, or his youthful sexual anger and confusion? This sixty-minute picture would be far too spare were it not for Hart's jolting, jagged-edged impersonation of Lennon. He melts down the twenty-two-year-old's whole ball of wax—his ebullience, toughness, sensitivity, even cruelty—and reworks it into a portrait of the artist as an icon of the polymorphous perverse.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 14-15.)

Odd Man Out (1946)—Wounded at noon, the Irish rebel Johnny MacQueen (James Mason) stumbles through the streets of Belfast until midnight—the object of an intense, widespread manhunt. The tormented, delirious man, bleeding to death, seeks (but does not find) refuge on his way to the grave. Though the director, Carol Reed, doesn't quite succeed in creating a masterpiece (the inflated ideas in the script don't allow him to), the film provides an experience that can't be shrugged off. Reed and the cinematographer, Robert Krasker, draw us so close to Mason's Johnny MacQueen that we want to save him to save ourselves.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 13-16.)

Open City (1945)—The fame of Roberto Rossellini's brutal, melodramatic account of the underground resistance to the Nazi occupation rests on its extraordinary immediacy and its rough, documentary look; at its most startling, it seems "caught" rather than staged. Shot on odds and ends of film stock, with fluctuating electricity, and showing people who a few weeks before had been part of the events, the movie gave us a cross-section of a city under terrible stress. When the initial $25,000 that Rossellini had raised was used up, he and Anna Magnani sold their clothes; Maria Michi, who had hidden men like Togliatti in her flat, now provided the flat for some of the sequences. In Italian.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Oct. 15 and 17.)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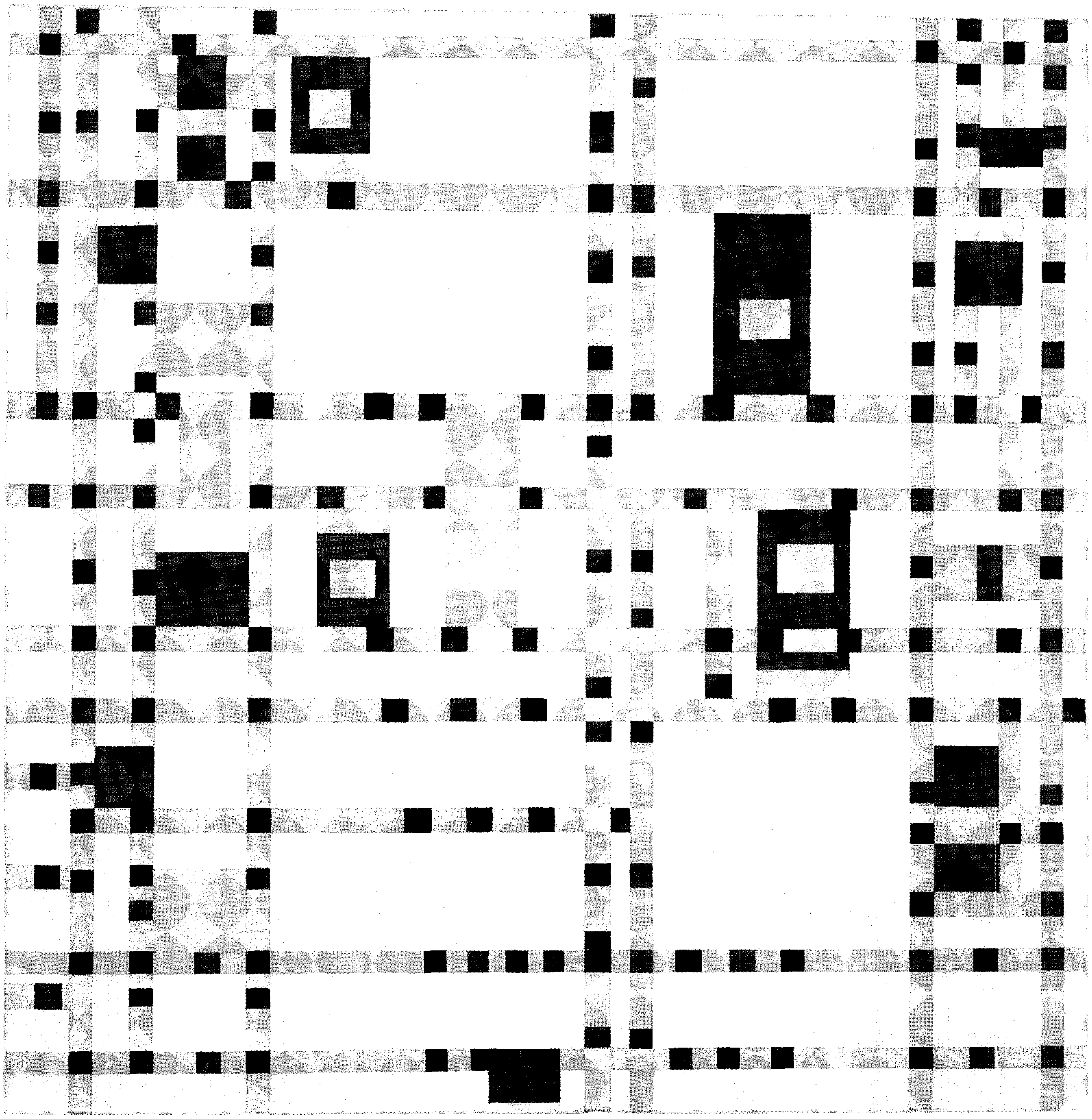


Broadway Boogie Woogie. 1942–43. Oil on canvas, 50 x 50". The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously, 1943.

Guess who's back in town?

One look at the painting above, and you'll know we're referring to Piet Mondrian, one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century. KPN Royal PTT Nederland, a Dutch postal and telecommunications company, is pleased to sponsor the exhibition **PIET MONDRIAN: 1872-1944**, on view at The Museum of Modern Art in New York through January 23, 1996. In addition to offering outstanding services and products, KPN is known in the Netherlands and throughout Europe for its encouragement of innovative art and design. The link with Piet Mondrian is thus a natural one. We would like to congratulate MoMA on this historic exhibition.

kpn

royal ptt nederland

Orphans of the Storm (1921)—It's almost unbelievable, but this D. W. Griffith spectacle set during the French Revolution was not a financial success. It's a marvellous, expensively produced mixture of melodrama and sentimentality, with duels, kidnappings, the storming of the Bastille, and Lillian Gish being saved from the guillotine. It's not one of Griffith's greatest, but those who saw it as children never forgot the sequence in which Lillian hears the voice of her long-lost blind sister, played by Dorothy Gish. Griffith sequences like this go beyond heart-wringing into some arena of theatrical sublimity.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 14.)

A Shot in the Dark (1964)—The Inspector Clouseau series peaked early with this homicidal farce, which came right after the soft-boiled detective débuted in "The Pink Panther." Peter Sellers keeps hitting on inspired ways to spark Clouseau's comic fatuity, while the director, Blake Edwards, creates running visual jokes that gambol, gamble—and pay off. Elke Sommer plays a maid named Maria, who is found at a murder scene holding a smoking gun; Clouseau insists on adhering to the facts, then ignores them on the theory that she's shielding somebody. Sellers' slapstick gags are like physical Freudian slips—staring soulfully at Maria, Clouseau sticks a flaming cigarette lighter into his coat pocket. His sham suaveness is uproarious: when Maria worries that he'll catch pneumonia, Clouseau muses, "I probably will, but it's all part of life's rich pageant." The script (by Edwards and William Peter Blatty) derives from a French farce (by Marcel Achard) that had already been adapted for the Broadway stage (by Harry Kurnitz). With George Sanders, Herbert Lom, and Burt Kwouk.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 15 and 17.)

At the Walter Reade Theatre, Roberto Rossellini's war trilogy.

STEVEN DANA

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

New York Film Festival—The annual festival of international films—**alice tully hall:** Oct. 11 at 6: "Alpsee" (Matthias Müller, Germany), "Zone" (Takashi Ito, Japan), and "River Colors" (Christoph Janetzko, Germany). . . . Oct. 11 at 9: "From the Journals of Jean Seberg" (Mark Rappaport, United States). . . . Oct. 12 at 6 and Oct. 14 at 5: "Cyclo" (Tran Anh Hung, France/Vietnam). . . . Oct. 12 at 9 and Oct. 14 at 2: "La Haine" (Mathieu Kassovitz, France). . . . Oct. 13 at 6 and Oct. 14 at midnight: "The Celluloid Closet" (Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, United States). . . . Oct. 13 at 9 and Oct. 14 at 11 A.M.: "The Flower of My Secret" (Pedro Almodóvar, Spain). . . . Oct. 14 at 8: "The Gate of Heavenly Peace" (Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon, United States). . . . **avery fisher hall:** Oct. 15 at 8:30: "Carrington" (Christopher Hampton, United Kingdom). (For tickets, call 875-5050.)

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Through Oct. 12: "Mickey One" (1965, Arthur Penn). . . . Oct. 13-16: "Night and the City" (1950, Jules Dassin) and "Odd Man Out" (†). . . . Oct. 17: "They Drive by Night" (1838, Arthur Woods) and "I Met a Murderer" (1939, Roy Kellino).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films made from Broadway plays. Oct. 12 at 2:30: "Charley's Aunt" (1941, Archie Mayo). . . . Oct. 12 at 6: "The Last Flight" (1931, William Dieterle). . . . Oct. 12 at 8: "We're No Angels" (1955, Michael Curtiz). . . . Oct. 13 at 2:30: "The Hasty Heart" (1949, Vincent Sherman). . . . Oct. 13 at 6 and Oct. 16 at 2:30: "He Who Gets Slapped" (1924, Victor Sjöström). . . . Oct. 13 at 8 and Oct. 15 at 2: "Tight Spot" (1955, Phil Karlson). . . . Oct. 15 at 5 and Oct. 17 at 2:30: "A Shot in the Dark" (†). . . . Oct. 16 at 6: "Brief Moment" (1933, David Burton). . . . Oct. 17 at 6: "The Good Fairy" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 3 and 6: "A Dreamscape: Gambling in America" (1995, Bernie Ijdis). . . . ¶ Oct. 13 at 3, 6, and 8:30; Oct. 14-15 at 2 and 5; and Oct. 16 at 3 and 6: A retrospective of the works of Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ Oct. 14 at noon and 4: "Orphans of the Storm" (†).

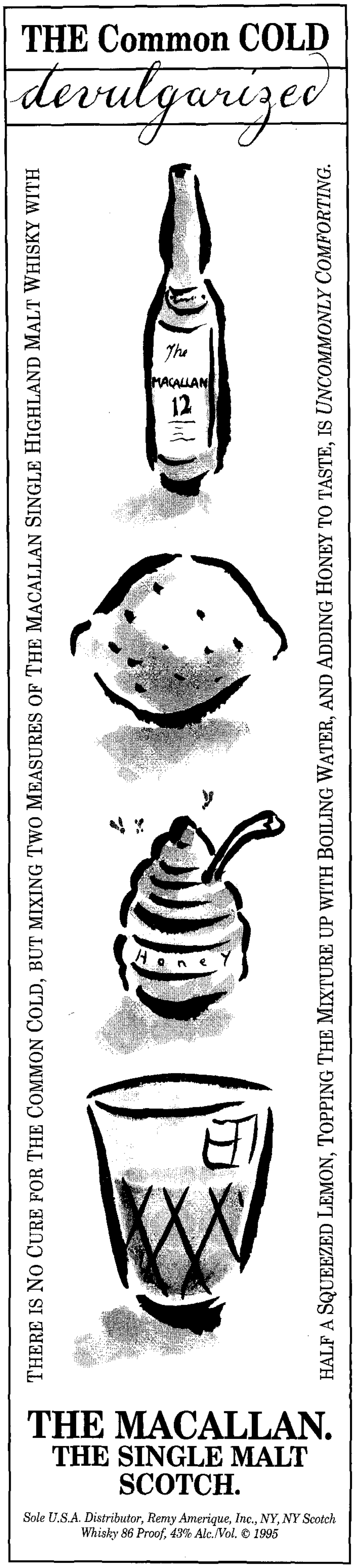
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Through Oct. 14: The Fourth Annual New York Video Festival. . . . ¶ Roberto Rossellini's war trilogy. Oct. 15 at 2 and Oct. 17 at 2, 4, 6, and 8: "Open City" (†). . . . Oct. 15 at 5: "Paisan" (1946). . . . Oct. 15 at 7:30: "Germany, Year Zero" (1947).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Oct. 14 at 2: "Clean, Shaven" (†). . . . Oct. 14 at 4:30 and Oct. 15 at 2: "The Hours and Times" (†). . . . Oct. 15 at 3:30: "Through the Olive Tree" (1994, Abbas Kiarostami). . . . Oct. 15 at 5:30: "Careful" (1992, Guy Maddin).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Oct. 12-13 at 8: "The Jungle Book" (1942, Zoltán Korda) and "Seconds" (1966, John Frankenheimer). . . . Oct. 14 at 6: "Kinoglaz" (1925, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film). . . . Oct. 14 at 8: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; a German silent film) and "Le Plaisir" (1952, Max Ophuls; in French). . . . Oct. 15 at 7: "Shagai, Soviet" (1926, Vertov; a Russian silent film) and "A Sixth of the World" (1926, Vertov; a Russian silent film).

Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (854-7799)—Documentaries that have been nominated for or have won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature or Best Documentary Short Subject. Oct. 12 at 7: "The True Glory" (1945, Garson Kanin and Carol Reed) and "Seeds of Destiny" (1946, David Miller).

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Oct. 17 at 7: "The Searchers" (1956, John Ford). . . . Oct. 17 at 9:30: "Black God, White Devil" (1963, Glauber Rocha; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).



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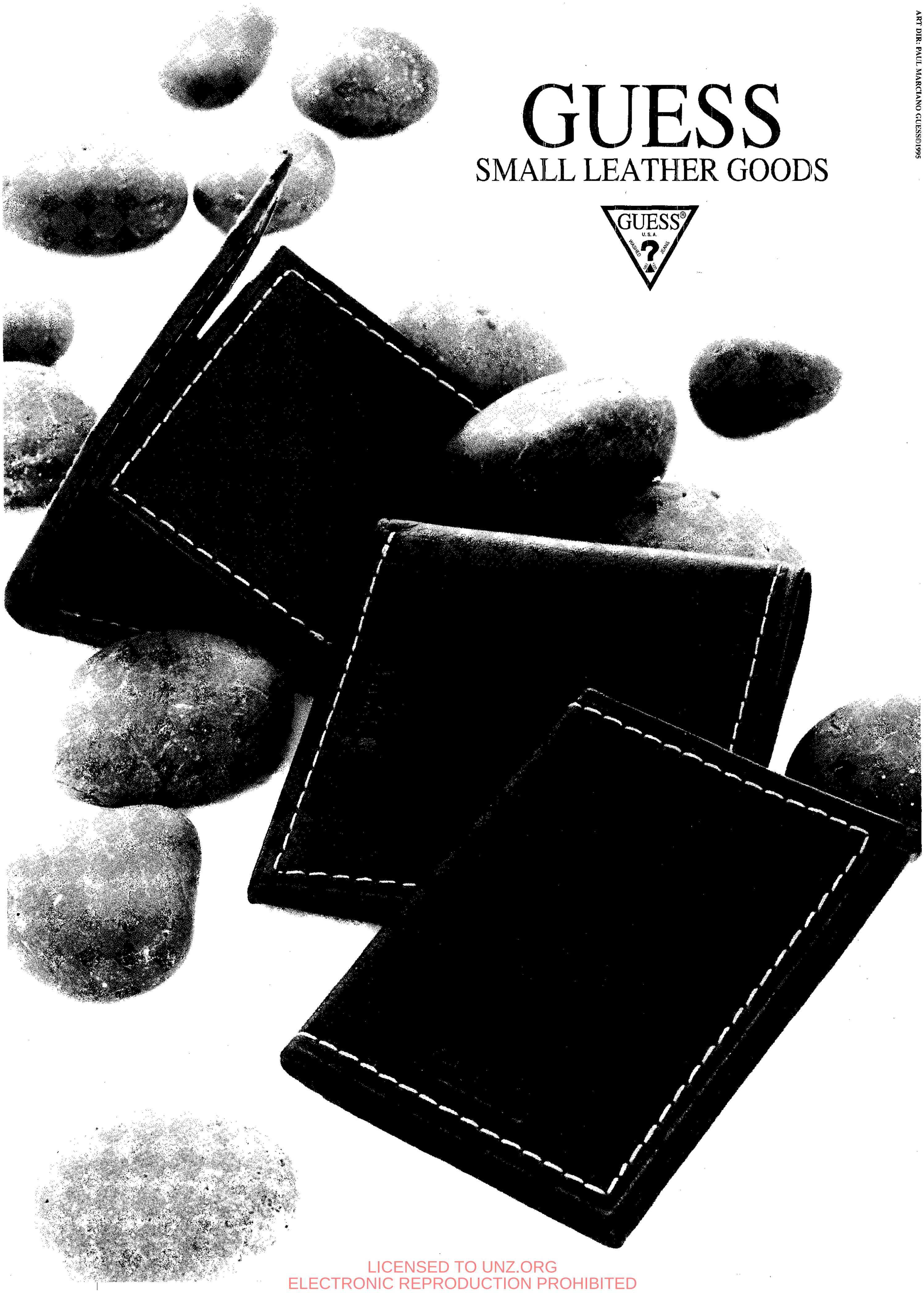
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Some scenes of domestic life—home cooking, home furnishing, home growing, home wrecking, etc.

OPEN DOORMAN

NEW YORKERS have an almost uncontrollable tendency to envy other New Yorkers. It's all over the city, on any street corner, ready to throw you off balance at any moment. There you are, walking up Park, having one of those rare moments of undamaging self-appraisal, and right in front of you a man in uniform whistles down a taxi and ushers a woman into it.

A doorman. The flicker of well-being disintegrates. Without a doorman, you're on your way to the post office—as you in fact happen to be—with an infuriating little yellow package slip in your hand. You're at the mercy of mail carriers and deliverymen. A New Yorker without a doorman is like a motherless child, and has dangerous fits of orphanlike frustration, morbid inferiority—envy.

In the West Village, however, some doormanless New Yorkers have found salvation (enviably) at the Golden Rabbit, a stationery store on Hudson Street, next to the White Horse. The Golden Rabbit won't get you a cab, but it has all the things a stationery store has, plus an idyllic sidewalk display of cut flowers, plus an arrangement to play doorman for four or five hundred neighborhood people. What's more, who does this is Johnny. Johnny will accept packages, dry cleaning, keys left for a friend, luggage sent from the airport when the plane arrives before you do. He'll do it for only a dollar (cheaper than holiday tipping) and hand over whatever it is with an ethereal sweetness that is beyond price. "You could leave diamonds with him, if you had any," one person he doormans for said recently.

Johnny is from Hyderabad, India. He has a full face, a wide, unfake smile, and a Mahatmaesque Anglo-Indian speech pattern. He studied in a Catholic school in Hyderabad, got his M.B.A. from the University of Poona, and, before arriving in New York three years ago, sold ladies' watches in India. He is twenty-nine years old.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Her door buzzer is broken, but she enjoys leaning out the window and hollering, "Wuddyawant?!"

One small studio for the two of them and their collection of sock monkeys.

The sound of Lite FM is constant in the Golden Rabbit. "I always keep this station on," Johnny says. "They play 'Horse with No Name.' Sometimes 'Michelle,' by the Beatles. I've been hearing it since I was a child. I hold on to it. In Catholic school, we used to listen to a d.j. named Tony—he played the Beatles before prayers in the morning."

While he's working, Johnny uses "beautiful" and "cool" at the end of almost every sentence, as if they were periods. It comes to sound like the approval you're always looking for, a soothing chant: "Yes, I have a fax, beautiful. . . . Cool, and I gave you four pennies back, beautiful." About a customer who's bought a card: "Married thirty-four years to one woman—beautiful. He buys flowers for her two, three times a week, beautiful." Then: "I owe you a dollar-forty, cool, beautiful."

How did he pick up the expression?

"My elder brother taught me how to say 'cool.' I was raised with this word. I used to be young, cool, and a good soccer player. Every time I say anything, the word 'cool' comes up by itself, beautiful."

Lin Neng Tian, who arranges the Golden Rabbit's sidewalk flower tubs, came to New York five years ago from Fuzhou, China, and doesn't speak much English. It's clear that he, too, is a beneficiary of Johnny's niceness. Just now he is pulling imperfect petals from some yellow roses. "He's a compulsive worker—seven days a week," Johnny says, adding, admiringly and protectively, "He used to work on construction, was going through rough times. My boss found him in Chinatown somewhere and they got along."

"What do you do for fun?"

"I have a friend whose name is Charlie. He's sixty-five. I get along well with elderly people. We go fishing in Battery Park City—buy a burger from McDonald's, go sit on the pier, and fish."

POET'S EDEN

When Stanley Kunitz bought his house in Provincetown, in 1962, the hillside slope was a sand dune. Kunitz had already made five gardens in the course of a lifetime, and he bought this place, he said, because "the house is so ugly I won't be tempted to do anything, and the land's impossible, so I won't be tempted to garden. Famous last words."

Every summer morning—and on into October, when he returns to New York City—the poet, who is ninety, works in his garden with a combination of vigilance and reverie which seems to be a prerequisite to artistic processes, whether the making of gardens or of poems. "He's an earth man," says Elise Asher, a painter and poet, who has been married to Kunitz for thirty-seven years.

"I love making things with my hands," Kunitz says. "I think I'm a frustrated sculptor. When I see the need for something to be beautiful, I'm involved." The first year, he began a process of terracing—shovelling the wet sand behind wooden barriers, building a series of brick terraces to stabilize the dune. Then he carried in vast amounts of seaweed and cordgrass from the bay and the nearby salt marsh, and tilled in years' worth of compost. As the sand became soil, Kunitz sketched out a plan of the space as he imagined it; the plot has been evolving from that sketch ever since.

At no point can the whole be seen at once; it is a garden one must walk through. It seems to exist, therefore, only in memory, in the viewer's work of assembling a sense of the whole. "Every garden is a replica," the critic Robert Harbison wrote, suggesting that gardeners always have in mind some recollected paradise. Kunitz's garden is full of echoes: the terraces suggest the Italian hillside gardens he loves, and its design nods to Japan as well, in the elegant forms of its evergreens, in its attention to lanterns and stones, and in its refusal to disclose all its secrets at once.

They brought his old clunky family piano from Ohio. Then the roof leaked. Then they sued. Now they have a beautiful piano.

She didn't seem weird until you saw her with her cats.

He likes her, but he's really starting to hate her stuff.

Other echoes are more personal. A patch of ribbon grass recalls his mother's garden, in Worcester, Massachusetts, in the early part of the century. An area of herbs preserves a hint of Kunitz's Depression-era farming, when he sold dried and bottled herbs. And there are literary and mythic resonances, too: a dark and moist corner, full of wide hosta leaves and the peculiar shredded bark of the Japanese cedar, reminds the poet of the gates of the underworld; a trio of stones seem to him the garden's protecting saints.

The garden's strict design is softened by its loose planting. Four Alberta spruce, one planted at roughly each corner of the narrow, rectangular lot, form the anchor posts of the dense, layered tapestry that nearly surrounds the space, screening out neighbors. The fourth wall is only partial, breaking open for a sharp, nearly infinite slice of steel-blue bay.

The rising terraces create a sense of cresting, of mounting waves of color and texture: each terrace is a new beginning, like a new stanza; each has its own structure and yet is part of the over-all pattern—"like the layering of a poem," Kunitz says. The garden also represents the layers of a life, having been through, Kunitz says, "at least a dozen metamorphoses. Now it's close to what I imagined it would be. It's never right, never perfect. Some things flourish, some die, some you get tired of, some you loathe and want to get rid of. It's like revising a poem—you keep the basic form, improve the details."

In a sense, the garden is about time, an arena of encounter with those forces which transform the garden and ourselves. "Everything, in the end, will be lost," Kunitz says. "No one will care for this plot of ground the way I have, but the memory will haunt some people. No way to prevent the garden from changing, any more than one can prevent one's own body from changing, one's own self from being replaced by other souls, spirits, talents."

A BROKER'S PAWNS

The broker was late, and the mob was getting restless. The ad had promised a two-bedroom apartment on West Sixty-fifth Street for only twelve hundred and fifty dollars, which probably meant that it was tiny and grimy, but hey, you never know. At twelve-thirty, there were twenty-two people massed outside a plain, obviously neglected little building on a shabby block. By twelve-fifty-five, the crowd had grown to thirty-eight, most of them women, split about evenly between "Wall Street" and "A Chorus Line."

"It's just like an audition," said a blond actress in her early thirties, who was there with a roommate who could have been her stunt double. "If you want a part, you'll wait around all day if you have to, and the director knows it. He can saunter in as late as he wants."

"Brokers," spat a woman in a dark Armani suit. "*They're* supposed to do all the legwork, not us. But no, they just sit around and wait for a crowd, and then stroll in and collect a big fee."

"They can do whatever they want," said another. "It's a seller's market."

"It's *always* a seller's market," growled someone who was obviously filled with resentment at the vain sacrifice of her lunch hour. "Have you ever heard them admit that it's a *renter's* market? Forget it."

"It's all so demeaning," groaned a woman who had rushed up from her job at N.Y.U. "They've got you over a barrel. I feel like a pawn to these brokers."

"I hear they want a hundred-dollar application fee," someone said, almost in a whisper.

"That's disgusting!" Armani yelped. "That's gotta be illegal. We should report that!"

"What if we all just refused to pay it?" the stunt double mused.

"Yeah," said Armani. "We should do that. We should all stick together. This has got to stop, already."

"Absolutely," the whisperer said, and not in a whisper. "Enough is enough." A rumble of assent spread through the crowd like a new strain of flu.

At that moment, he arrived: a small man with a Groucho Marx mustache, a charcoal suit, and brown shoes. The crowd parted for him like the Red Sea. As he walked up the crumbling stoop, they all pressed in close behind him, jockeying for the best shot at the front door, with Armani and her cadre up front. No one asked the man why he was so late.

STARVING CHILDREN

IN the movie "Kids," a band of teen-agers forages for sex, drugs, and booze on New York City streets. The cruelty of these adolescents who taunt gay men and beat up random passersby, the callousness with which they call their girlfriends "bitches" as they paw them into submission, the subhuman grunts and epithets of their speech make the mind reel. I'm still haunted by the shot at the end of the film of their bodies sprawled over one another, like youths brought in for a Roman emperor's debauch, on the floor of a spacious Manhattan apartment. I keep recalling the remains of their daily fodder—liquor bottles and discarded joints, tacos, burritos drenched in pools of salsa—that litter the site of their orgy. It is that last detail, suggesting their feral, boorishly gulped diet, that somehow comes to mind when one of the film's characters wakes up from his all-night bender in a Manhattan apartment filled with leather furniture and abstract art, looks straight at the camera, and asks, "What happened?"

WHAT has happened to the American family—the fraying effect of harassed working parents, the stranglehold of the media, the pressures of peer culture—is a theme much ranted about. Yet one aspect of what has happened has been overlooked: kids like those we see in "Kids"—they come from all over the social spectrum—never seem to sit down to a proper meal at home anymore. This is not another pious harangue on "spiritual starvation"; this is about the fact that we may be witnessing the first generation in history that has not been required to participate in that primal rite of socialization, the family meal. The family meal is not only the core curriculum in the school of civilized discourse; it is also a set of protocols that curb our natural savagery and our animal greed, and cultivate a capacity for sharing and thoughtfulness.

Dinner rituals have nothing to do with class, or working women's busy lives, or any particular family structure. I've had dinners of boiled potatoes with families in Siberia, suppers of deli cold cuts with single welfare mothers in Chicago, bowls of watery gruel in the Sahara—all made memorable by the grace with which they were offered and by the sight of youngsters learning through experience the art of human companionship. The teen-agers on display in "Kids" are not only physically starved—devitaminized, made hyperactive—by the junk food they consume as they slouch in front of the TV or lope toward their next bacchanal. Far worse, they are deprived of the main course of civilized life—the practice of sitting down at the dinner table and observing the attendant conventions. Like the Passover seder or the Communion bread, the ritual of nutrition helps to imbue families, and societies at large, with greater empathy and fellowship. However, all rituals involve, to some degree, a sacrifice, and the home meal requires genuine sacrifices of time and energy, large expenditures of those very traits it nurtures—patience, compassion, self-discipline.

Many of the teen-agers in "Kids"—the more affluent ones—are the offspring of the "me generation," members of what Christopher Lasch called "the culture of narcissism." And those parents may be the most at fault. Might it be that they have stinted on the socializing of their children by focussing on their own rituals of self-improvement—enjoying their workout highs at health clubs or their learning highs in evening classes? How much more fun it is, how much less tiring, for us to enjoy a fine, quiet dinner by ourselves, or with our buddies, without the litany of questions and corrections that youngsters' company entails. But the family meal should continue to be a ceremonial, sacred time. If we don't hold on to it, we risk rearing yet more kids who wake up asking "What happened?"

—FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY

AFTER THE DELUGE

IT was about a year and a half ago, during a famously brutal winter, that everybody on West Eleventh Street learned about the actor F. Murray Abraham's pipes. On an extremely cold day, one of them burst, flooding his apartment and the elegant lobby below. Despite the trauma and the inconvenience, Abraham's neighbors were forgiving: they had pipes, too, and people with pipes share a fixed if latent bond.

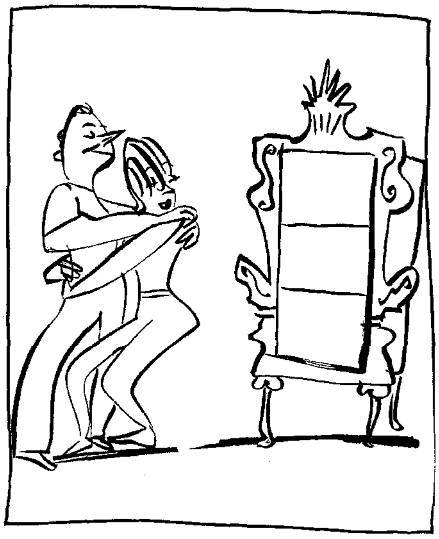
The other day, over a lunch of halibut and mesclun salad, Abraham was still discussing his pipes. "They were not insulated, which is what you're supposed to do," he said. The pipe-bursting, he explained, came right after the completion of a several-hundred-thousand-dollar renovation of his apartment, and it ruined much of the work. Furthermore, when the last puddles had been squeegeed from the lobby onto the sidewalk, Abraham was left holding the bill for those repairs, too—nearly fifty thousand dollars' worth, he said. His voice then dropped to a whisper, and he added, "I would like to seek retribution."

They started cooking together and found that it was a great way to talk.

In fact, Abraham has been exacting his retribution for over a year now. It takes the form of a notice, which he has run since August of 1994, at three hundred dollars a pop, in the New York *Observer's* classified section. "Corelli-Deiss May Not Use Me as a Reference—F. Murray Abraham," it reads, in very large type.

Corelli-Deiss is the architectural firm that Abraham used for his renovation. The architect Stephen Corelli said the pipes should have been insulated but attributes the problem to a faulty air-conditioning system. "If we had been culpable, he would have sued," Corelli pointed out. He admitted that enduring Abraham's campaign has been "a kind of nightmare." Corelli added, "We did an excellent job on the renovation, and all the while Murray was a very mercurial individual. I think he's a bully."

After lunch, Abraham walked back to his apartment. It was an odd, unsettling sight: the esteemed, Academy Award-winning actor, standing in his disembowelled apartment—walls ripped out, ganglia of cables and cords hanging from the ceiling—and shouting "Dirty bastards!" at a bank of exposed pipes. When he was asked about the *Observer* ad, his expression darkened. "It's all I can do," he said. "And I'm going to run it forever."



Their Guatemalan cabinet finally arrived, and they admitted it was a brilliant purchase.

DIRTY FURNITURE

A FEW years ago, when Joe Hurley played guitar in a reggae-and-rock band, his friends called him Thirsty Joe Mosh, but now he mostly goes by Kinky Joe. His latest nickname refers to his new career—designing, building, and selling specialty furniture. Hurley's twelve-page furniture catalogue offers such items as the Bend-Over Chair, the Multi-Position Stair Sofa, and the Kinky Headboard, which has hidden stocks with holes for the wrists ("Mom will never know . . . Available in oak or birch veneer").

Hurley, a skinny, jittery twenty-eight-year-old Bronx native with a mustache, could easily be mistaken for a handyman. He was inspired to go into the erotic-furniture business after chatting with a woman with a pierced nipple. Hurley figured that while others manufacture equipment for hard-core sadomasochists, he could corner the market on "sexual furniture for the everyday Joe, coming home from work and having sex with his wife." He already knew how to build cabinets and repair furniture, and once he'd set up a toll-free number and discovered direct mail he found his niche.

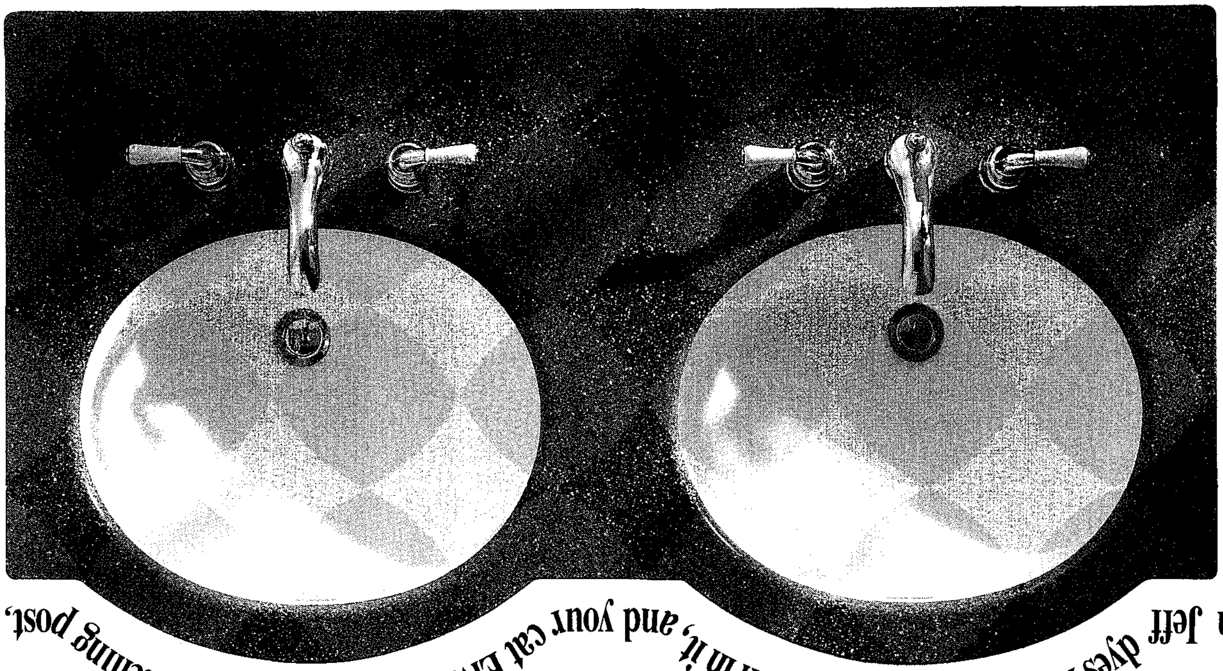
A couple of months ago, Hurley moved his workshop from the Bronx to a loft building full of artists in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. The new space has a nine-by-fifteen-foot showroom in which, for fifty dollars an hour, customers can privately sample the merchandise. He invented most of the items himself—some of them, like the Genital Restraint Chair, in response to a particular customer's fantasies. Occasionally, a client's imagination is kinkier than Kinky Joe's, and he will take custom orders. He has been working on a convertible bondage table-bench for a dominatrix; since she is quite small, it has to be easy to fold up. "She's like my little Bernadette Castro," he said.

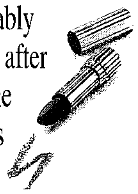
"What? You again?"

On being asked if he had ever received complaints, Hurley shook his head and, after a nervous snicker, said, "All my customers have been completely satisfied." ♦

"Open Doorman," Alison Rose; "Poet's Eden," Mark Doty; "A Broker's Pawns," Richard Rubin; "After the Deluge," Warren St. John; "Dirty Furniture," Blake Eskin.

You just put in a new Corian® double vanity and in no time your two-year old draws a smiley face on it with your lipstick, your punk-rock son Jeff dyes his hair fluorescent green in it, and your cat Elvis mistakes it for a scratching post, so you scrub it with some cleanser and it looks like





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THE LIFE OF A HOUSE

HOMEMAKING

Moving into the perfect house—and sharing it with the memories of the family who lived there before.

BY JAMAICA KINCAID

FROM ten of my house's thirty windows I can see a mountain called Mt. Anthony.

I do not know what Anthony this mountain is named after, but I don't think Anthony is such a distinguished name for a mountain. The name lends itself so easily to familiarity, and one shouldn't be on intimate terms with a mountain. Mt. Tony. I think this as I'm sitting inside my house looking at the mountain. I almost never really notice the mountain when I am outside my house. When I am outside my house, other things occupy me.

I love the house in which I live. Before I lived in it, before I was ever even inside it, before I knew anything about it, I loved it. I would drive by and see it sitting on its knoll, seeming far away (because I, we, did not own it then), mysterious in its brown shingles and red shutters, surrounded by the most undistinguished of evergreens (but I did not then know they were undistinguished), seeming humble. That is how it drew attention to itself—by seeming humble. I longed to live in this house. I was a grownup woman by that time; I had already had my first child and should have settled by then the question of where to live and the kind of place to live in, for that sort of settling down is an external metaphor for something that should be internal, a restfulness, so that you can concentrate on this other business, living, bringing up a child. But I would see this house and long for it. It was especially visible in winter, for then the other trees, the ones that were not evergreens, were bare of leaves. These other trees, too, were without horticultural interest—common maples (the kind that seed themselves everywhere, crowding one another out, distorting one another's trunks), chokecherry, cottonwood. When the house was surrounded by snow, it was particularly beautiful. The knoll it stands on falls away into a meadow, and I would imagine my children (though I had only one child when I first saw the house, I knew I would have more; I always wanted to have more than one child, and the reason is completely selfish, but with children is there any other kind of reason?) sliding down this slope in snowsuits, on sleds. This is now a sight I see quite regularly on a winter's day when there is snow on the ground—while looking out the same windows from which I view the mountain named after someone called Anthony.

A house has a physical definition; a home has a spiritual one. My house I can easily describe: it is made of wood (Douglas-fir beams, red-cedar shingles), and it contains four bedrooms, a sleeping porch, two and a half baths, a kitchen that flows into a large area where we eat our meals, a living room, a sunroom, a room over the garage, where my husband works, and another room, across from the kitchen, where I work. That is my house. My home cannot be described so easily; many, many things make up my home.

The house in which I now live was built in 1936 by a man named Robert H. Woodworth, for himself and his wife, Helen, and their three children. I am very conscious of this fact, for almost every day something makes me so: the view of Mt. Anthony, those uninteresting evergreens, the plumbing acting up, the low cost of heating such a large house (it is well insulated), the room in which I write. Robert Woodworth died in the room in which I write. A barometer, which he may have consulted every day, still hangs in the same place he must have put it many years ago. I have no real interest in the weather, only as it might affect my garden, so I regard the barometer as a piece of decoration. Robert Woodworth was a botanist and physiologist, and taught these subjects at a nearby college. He was one of the American pioneers of time-lapse photography. I do not know if the exciting and unusual collection of

The author, her children, and the house that she longed for. (*Photograph by Mariana Cook.*)

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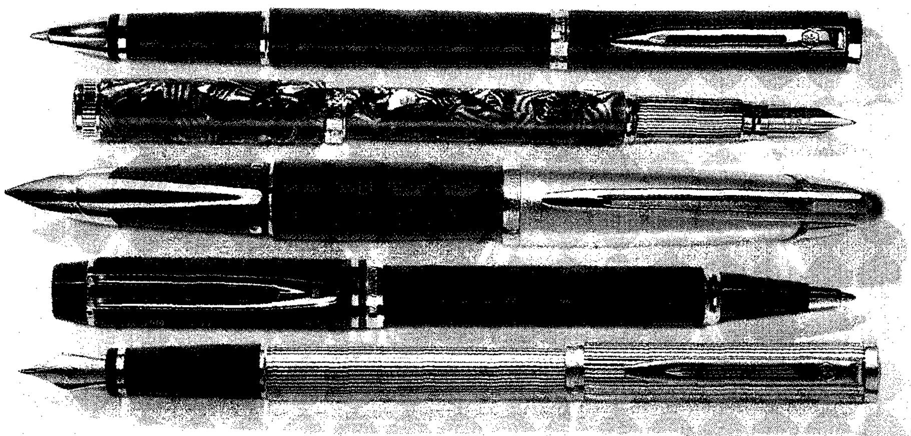

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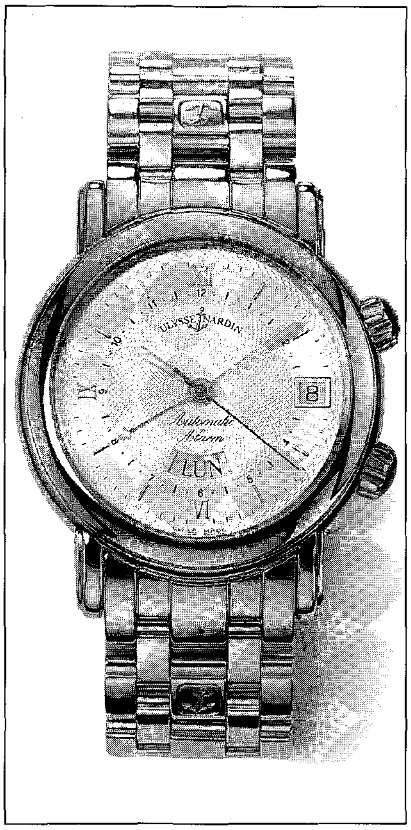

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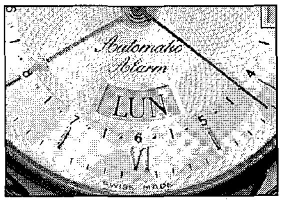

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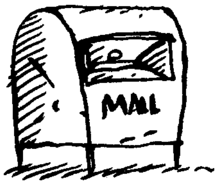
trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpits, squirrel corn, Solomon's seal, and mayapple that are in a bed just outside the kitchen window are the very same ones that appear in his time-lapse films. He tended a vegetable garden and also raised chickens. There was a henhouse right near the vegetable garden, but, after much agonizing, I tore it down. It was a beautiful Vermont-like structure, which is to say simple, calling attention to itself by its very simplicity, the way the house does. I loved the henhouse, but I did not want to have hens. I was not around to see it actually being dismantled.

There are people alive who remember Robert Woodworth building the house, by himself, without the guidance of an architect: His two oldest children, boys then, very grownup men now, for instance. And a man who sells real estate remembers how, as a small boy, he went with Robert Woodworth to borrow a horse-drawn scoop from the town to make the hole in the ground which would become the foundation. It is an excellent foundation; people who know about such things tell me so. The middle son tells of the difficulty of making the hole in the ground; the contraption was nothing like the powerful, smooth backhoes that my son Harold is so in love with now. It took much manual manipulation; the Vermont soil is mostly rocks.



The middle son remembers that, later, after the house was completed and they were living in it, his father thought that Mrs. Woodworth and the children would enjoy a sunroom, and he watched as his older brother helped his father build an addition to the house, a room with exposed beams and a slate floor. This room, the sunroom, has a spectacular view of Mt. Anthony; it also has some special windows that slide open with a curving motion instead of just moving straight across. I was told by an architect that most carpenters today would find this kind of window difficult to make. These windows are almost impossible to open and shut, but I could never replace them, certainly not the way I have replaced the storm windows for all the other rooms in the house. The old storm windows had to be removed in the summer and replaced in the winter. My husband and I had many quarrels over whose chore this should be. He grew up in a city, in an apartment building, and was used to calling someone to perform tasks that no one in his family could or would perform; I grew up in a climate in which windows were opened and shut for the purpose of keeping out light or letting in light, and such a chore could be performed by anyone capable of it, even a child.

It is through the emotions of the youngest of the three men who grew up in the house in which I now live, his lasting attachment to it, that I view the house. Those ordinary, unimpressive evergreens? He remembers when they were planted, remembers how small they were, how big in relation to his own height at the time. He looks at the trees and places his hand somewhere above his head and says he remembers them being that much taller than he was. He was, of course, smaller than he is now, but when he sees the trees and when he speaks of the trees he is speaking of things that he is perhaps conscious of, perhaps not, but that in any case should not be communicated clearly. He is speaking of a mystery. Where did the trees come from and why did his father plant them?

I once had a botanist come and look at the trees, a botanist who is a successor to Robert Woodworth at the college where he taught. The botanist said there was nothing of any real interest planted here—just hemlocks, Norway spruce, pines. This botanist meant that there was nothing of botanical interest planted near my house; he had never seen the youngest son of Robert Woodworth measure his grown self against the grown tree. To see the top of the grown tree now, the grown man has to arch his head way back until it is uncomfortable to swallow while doing so, and then he cannot hold the pose for too long. I once invited a man to dinner, a man who knows a lot about landscape and how to remake it in a fashionable way. He did not like the way I had made a garden, and he told me that what I ought to do was remove the trees. It is quite likely that I shall never have him back for a visit to my house, but I haven't yet told him so. After he left, I went around and apologized to the trees.

The people who were children in the

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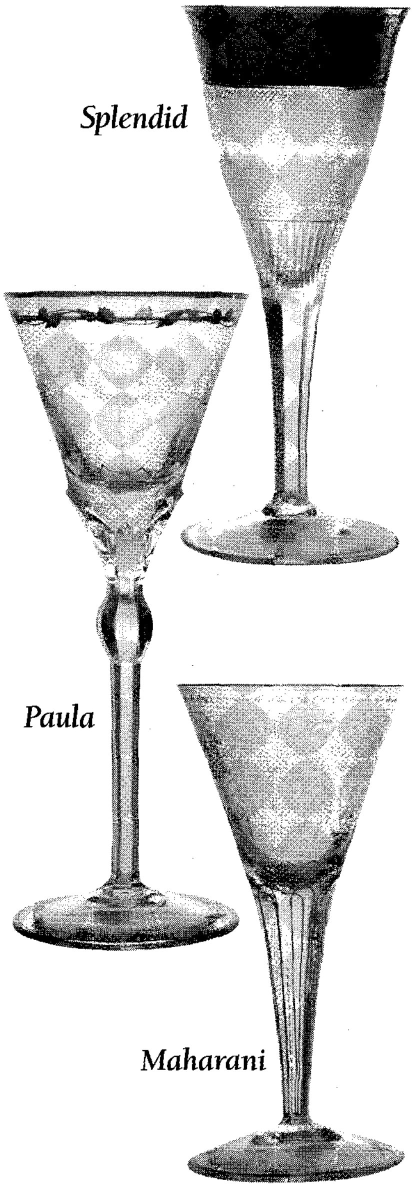

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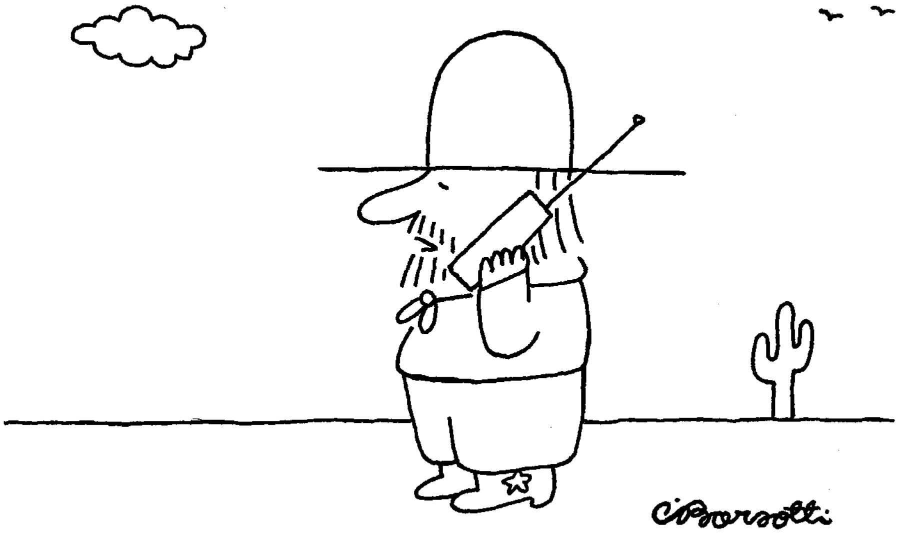


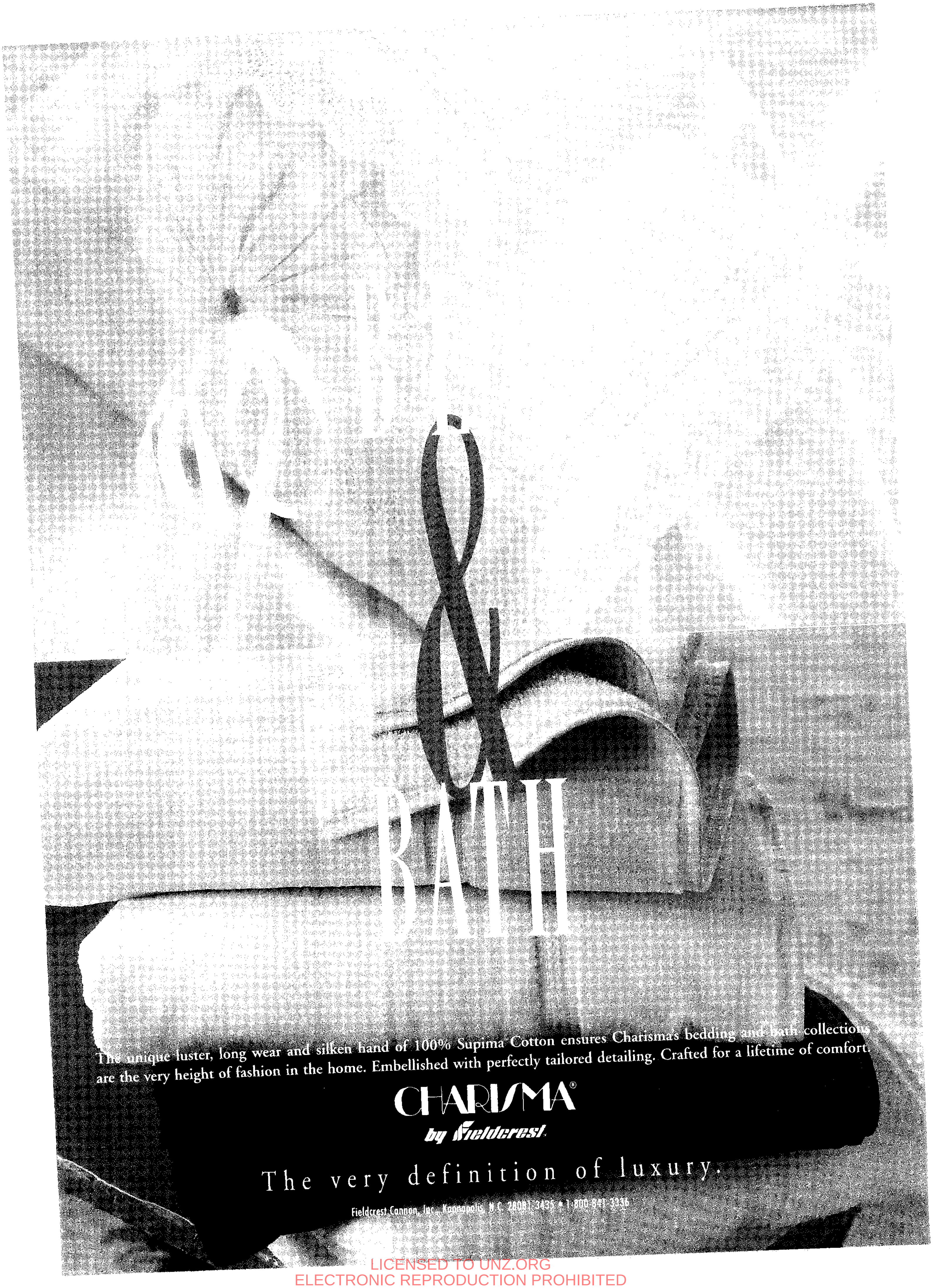
"I'm on the range, but I'm not home on the range."

• •

house in which I now live were very sorry to have it sold out of their family. I understood their feeling so well that I told them they could come back and see the house any time they wished, and I also told them that if we were ever to sell our house we would call them all—the children of the Woodworths, the grandchildren of the Woodworths—and offer to sell it to them first. My husband and I believe that we shall never live anyplace else, certainly not if we can help it, but we can't really tell what we will be able to help or not help; we only know that we believe we shall never live anyplace else. When the Woodworths were clearing out the house after it was sold to us, different people took things that meant something to them. One grandchild took a bed that he had slept in when he came to visit his grandparents; someone else took the bellows for the fireplace, because they were unusual and because of some special memory. I do not know who took the reproduction of an engraved print depicting the Pilgrim legend of Myles Standish and Priscilla. When we were dismantling Mrs. Woodworth's kitchen, someone asked us to look for recipe cards that might have fallen behind her old kitchen counter; he remembered something with a meringue and kept asking us if we were sure when we said we had found nothing. One son took cuttings of Mrs. Woodworth's roses, because they had come from her mother's garden in Maine many, many years ago.

I cannot believe that my children will return to this house shortly after I am dead (I do so strongly believe that I will live here for the rest of a very long life) and ask the new owners (for my children are Americans, and Americans are unable to live adult lives in the places where they were born) to try and retrieve my copy of Edna Lewis's cookbook, from which our family has enjoyed recipes for corn pudding and fried chicken and biscuits; and they will not ask for the five volumes of Elizabeth David's cookbooks, in which are recipes for food our family has enjoyed, not the least being something called summer pudding, a dessert made of currants and stale bread (the berries foreign to me until adulthood, when I grew them, and the bread distasteful to me, though only through the memory of my own childhood), or the perpetually leafed-through but never actually used "Mrs. Beeton's Household Management." I cannot imagine that my children will want to admit that they actually came from us and did not fall out of the plain blue sky, which is just what I used to wish when I became aware that to have me my parents had actually had sex.

Just the other day, my husband overheard my daughter say to her friends, as he approached her and some other girls all huddled together, "Oh, here comes my dworky dad." He was humiliated at hearing himself referred to as a dwork, and so he said to the other girls "Hi. Now, do I look like a dwork?" and instead of saying, in unison, "No, you are the most wonderful father we have ever had the good fortune to meet," all the



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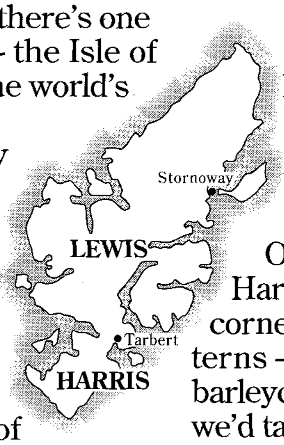

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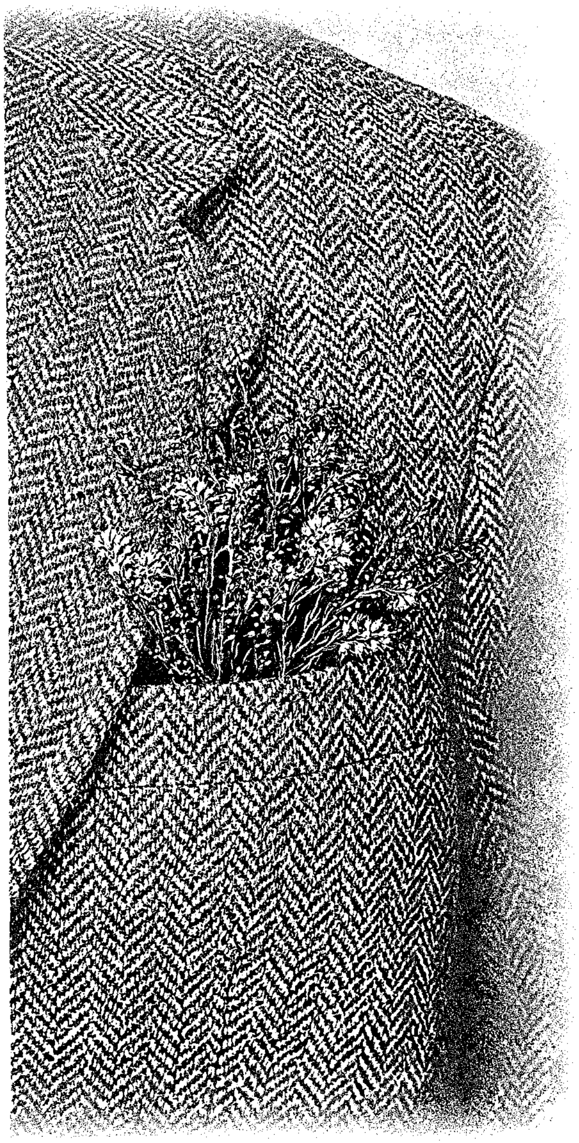

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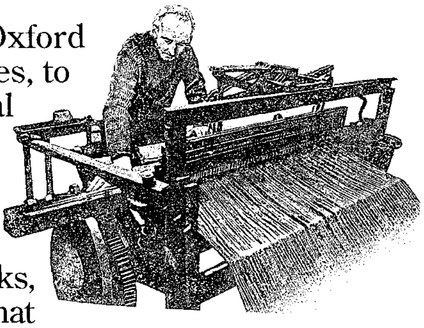

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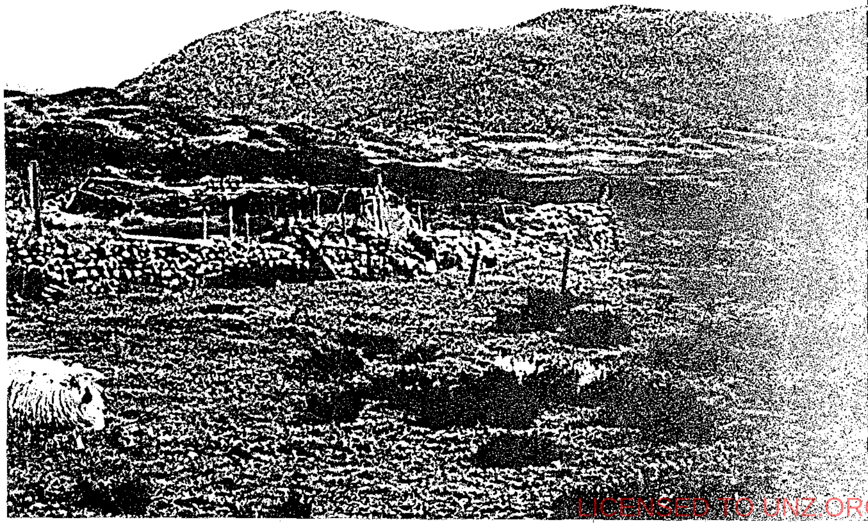

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girls simply looked at the tips of their shoes in what he interpreted to be silent agreement. But our children are still children: Harold is seven, and Annie is ten. Perhaps they think that we will live forever, that we will never go away—that they will never be able to be themselves without our reminding them of their own helplessness, their own dependence on us. Perhaps pies with meringue topping and summer puddings are missed only when they can never be had in exactly the same way again.

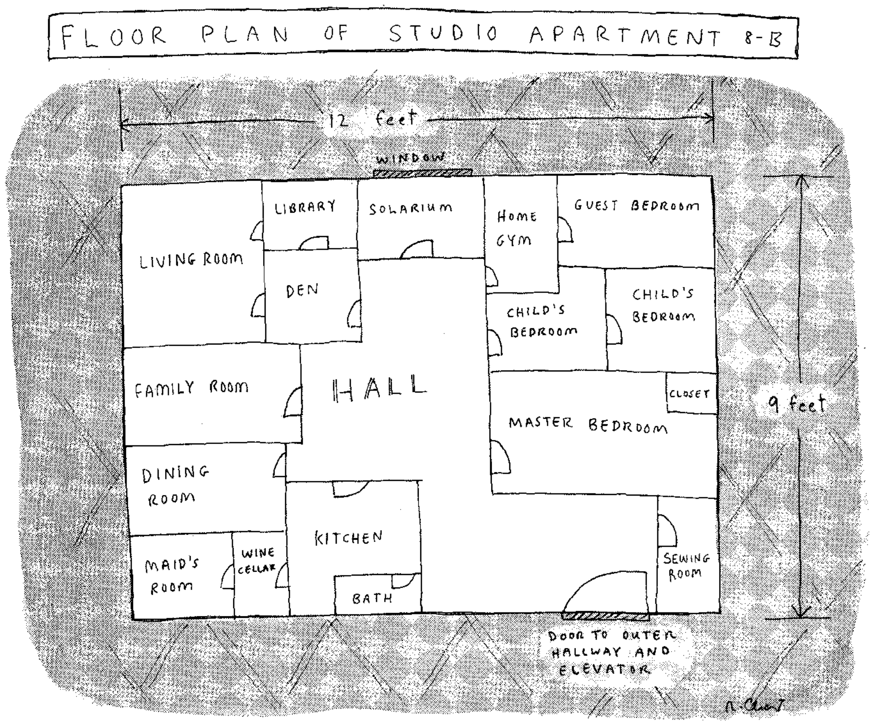
EVERYBODY who accomplishes anything leaves home. This action, leaving home, has an effect on the people left behind and sometimes, most dramatically, on the new people one meets.

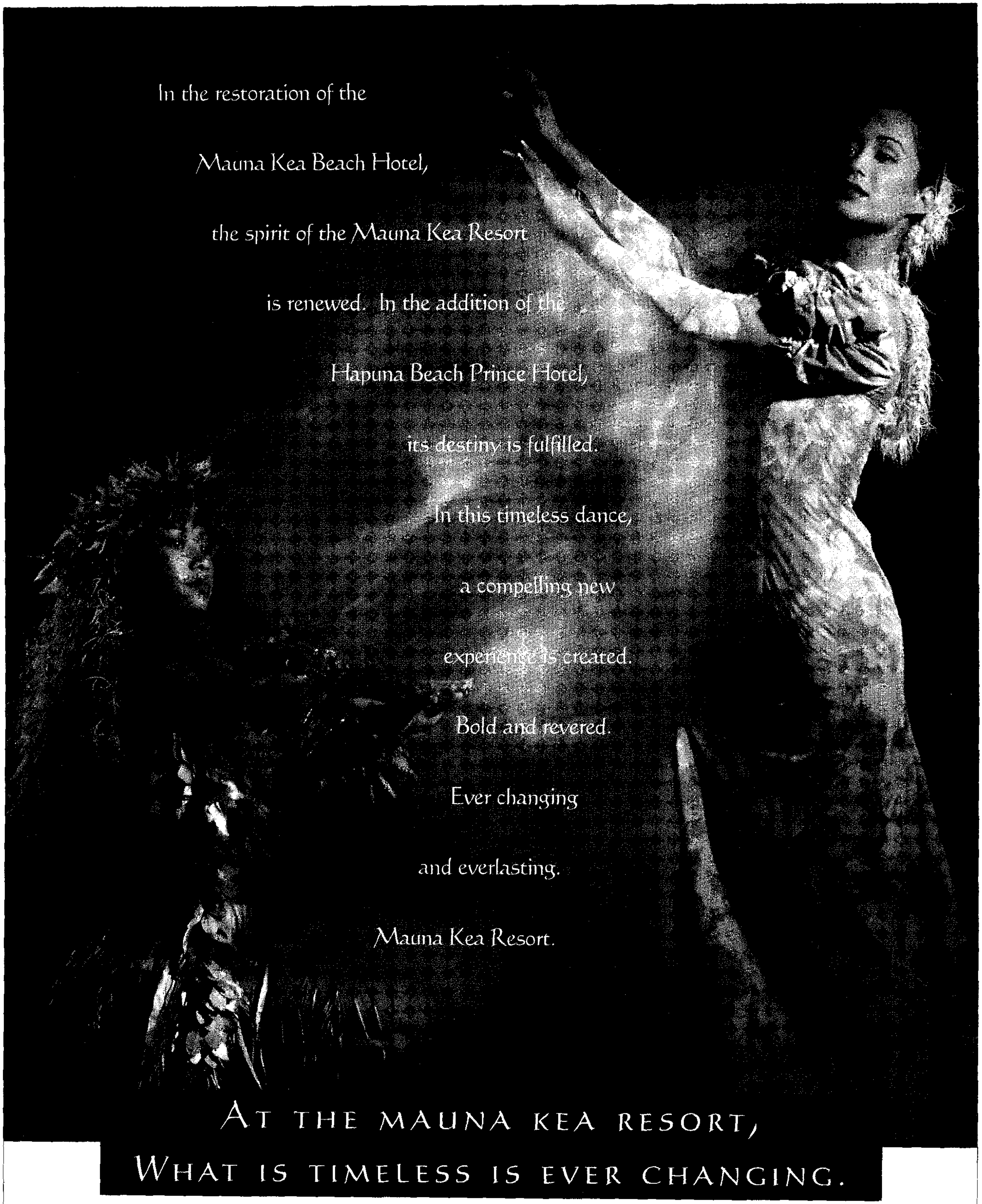
Early one morning in January four years ago, I was running with my friend Meg and we came to a point in our conversation where we had to stop running, because of the strong feelings brought to the surface by discussing our children in particular (she has three, I have two) and the world in general (between the two of us, there is only one of those). Suddenly, I saw the house I now live in looming out of the newborn day. I was standing perhaps a hundred yards from it, but it seemed far away, shrouded by a forest of those insignificant evergreens (it seemed a forest then, but in reality they are very few) and, of course, shrouded by unfamiliarity, because I had never been inside it; I had seen this house only from the road and longed to live in it. When I saw the house that morning while running with Meg, I said to her, "I wish I lived in that house," and she replied, "You know, that's Robert Woodworth's house, and I think I just read in the paper that he died. I bet that house is for sale. I bet his children don't want it." It is only now that I can think of the luxury of a man's children choosing to dispose of the substantial things he might have left for them, choosing to keep only the recipes for pies and cuttings of old roses—choosing memories, as opposed to the real thing, the house. Robert Woodworth's children did want to sell the house. They were sad about it: they had loved their father and they had loved their mother; they had loved living in this house; their own children had loved spending summers with their grandparents in this house. But Robert Woodworth's children are Americans; Americans will rarely live in the houses where they were children.

Our decision to buy Robert Woodworth's house plunged us into a crisis. We were living in a house that we had outgrown. We had started out living in it as a family of three—a mother, a father, and a two-year-old girl. By the time I expressed my longing for Robert Woodworth's house to my friend Meg, we had become a family of four. Our old house was at least twenty times as big as the house I grew up in—a house in a poor country with a tropical climate—but I had lived in America for a long time and had adjusted myself to the American habit of taking up at least twenty times as much of the available resources as each person needs. This is a trait that is beyond greed. A greedy person is often cross, unpleasant. Americans—at least, the ones that I am personally familiar with—are not at all cross. They are quite happy and reasonable as they take up at least twenty times as much of everything as they need. For four people, we needed a bigger house. We decided then that we should sell our house to enable us to buy Robert Woodworth's house. We consulted a real-estate broker, and she told us that we should ask for our house an amount of money that was many times what we had paid for it. It was expected that we would make a profit.

But no one would buy our house—not for the price we asked, not for a little less, not for a lot less. Our house sat there. Each day, we prayed that someone would come and buy it; each day, we prayed that no one else would notice the Woodworth house sitting there empty—how beautiful it was, how happy a family could be living there. My family and I had one small advantage, one small blessing: the Woodworth children seemed to favor our having the house, because my husband is a composer and because—from their childhood memories of their mother playing the piano and their father playing the banjo and the mandolin—they imagined that the house with us in it would be filled with music, the way it was when they were children. They were right. The house *is* often filled with music, though from time to time it is the music of a group called Offspring, Annie and Harold's favorite band. As each deadline for that part of the house-buying-and-selling ceremony called "passing papers" came and went, we would call the Woodworth children and anxiously reiterate our plight, and they would reassure us that they would wait a little bit longer before putting the house on the open market.

One day, seven months after the day I was running with Meg and saw Robert Woodworth's house and expressed the longing to live in it, two young people came to look at our house. (It was painted yellow—a yellow common to





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houses in Finland, not the yellow of the Caribbean, the place I am from. This was a deliberate choice on my part, and I was expressing something quite ordinary—that is, liking the thing you are not.) They offered an amount of money, and we accepted it immediately, and this made them suspicious, for they had thought that there would be that other house-buying-and-selling ceremony, the counter-offer. I was so eager to leave my old house that I left behind some Festiva Maxima peonies that had been given to me; they were divided from a plant that was fifty years old. It is only now, when I drive by my old house in June and see them blooming, that I am filled with regret that I did not say to the people buying my house, "Yes, that price will do very well as long as I can take my Festiva Maxima, for not only are they the most beautiful of peonies but they are the first flowers I isolated and became attached to, at the moment I became a gardener."

I cannot now remember the day on which the house we used to live in was sold, and I cannot remember the day on which Robert Woodworth's house became our house. I can remember only that none of the heirs' domiciles could accommodate Helen Woodworth's piano. It was offered to us for purchase, but we could hardly afford the down payment on the house and so had to decline. It now sits in our living room, waiting for permanent settlement in the home of one of Helen's grandchildren. My children practice their piano lessons on it all the time. Many quarrels take place over Helen's piano. Annie and Harold do not like to practice their piano lessons; apparently, no child who lives in the culture of piano playing—a culture that imposes love of music through the piano—ever likes to practice the piano. And so this piano is yet another reminder of the Woodworths.

If you must go through your life being reminded of people you have never met, Robert and Helen Woodworth should be the people you receive for this memory. At Robert Woodworth's memorial service, there were many people from the small village in which he had lived. Some of them were colleagues of his, others were just local people he had known. I believe I was the only person there who had never met him. I do not think that any of the others noticed how many of their memories of him began like this: "Bob and I were chopping wood" or "I gave Bob some wood" or "That day Bob called me about some wood." I desperately wanted to stand up and point out the connection between the wood and the name of the person being commemorated. I did not. All the people who talked about him mentioned how much he loved Helen and how much they all loved Helen, too. One man spoke about how Bob played Dixieland jazz with a group of men every Tuesday night. One night, the last Tuesday night before he died, he said goodbye to them, and this man said to him, "See you next week, Bob," and Robert Woodworth said, "I don't think so." And he was right. He died before the next Tuesday night. After we bought the house, we went through it and found a lot of wood in the basement ready for the fireplace. In the basement there was also a wood-burning stove that was hooked up to the furnace. We realized that we could heat the entire house with wood, if anyone in my family were capable of cutting it.

When Mr. Woodworth died, in the room in which I now write, he was alone. Helen had died two years before. His spirit does not haunt the room. His spirit does not haunt the house. One night, during the first winter we spent in the house, I was lying in my bed when suddenly I smelled smoke. I ran into every room, I ran into the attic, I ran into the basement, trying to see where the smell of smoke came from, trying to see if I could find the thing burning. The smell of smoke was not to be found in any other part of the house—only in my bedroom. The phenomenon occurs only in the wintertime and only in that one room.

The sun does not rise each day mystically from behind Mt. Anthony, nor do the sun's rays fall inevitably at the end of each day on its green surface. Mt. Anthony is to the south of my house. It is a mountain that does not invite the least curiosity. There is no legend attached to it. No strange man seen by only one person at a time lives there. No strange animal seen by only one person at a time lives there. It is simply a mountain. I use this mountain as a map for my thoughts. I look at it and look at it, and I begin to imagine my life, my life in my home, my life in this house, my life away from this house. The mountain will persist long after I and my home, the house itself, are no longer here. ♦

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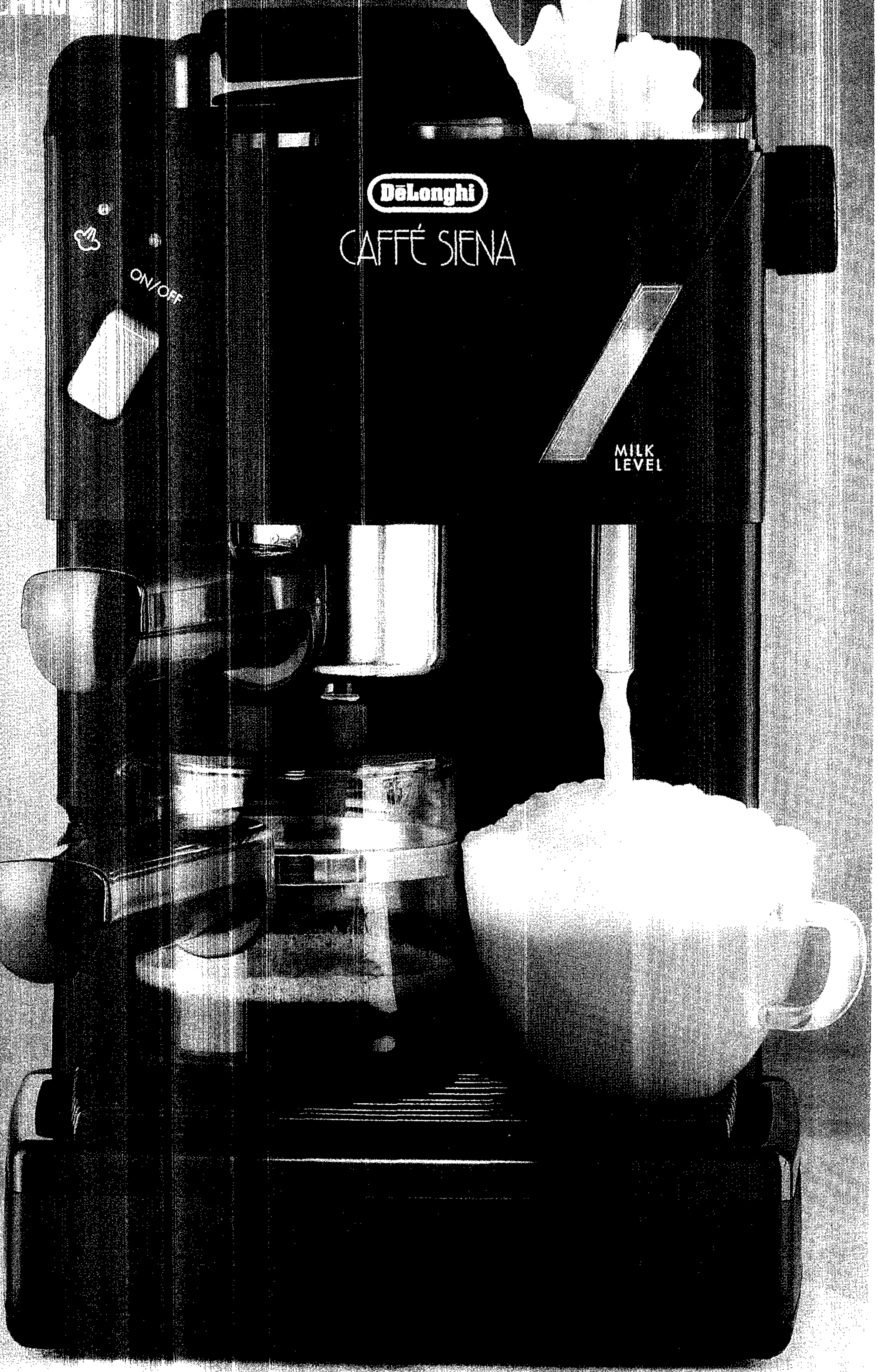

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BRAVE NEW WORLD DEPT.

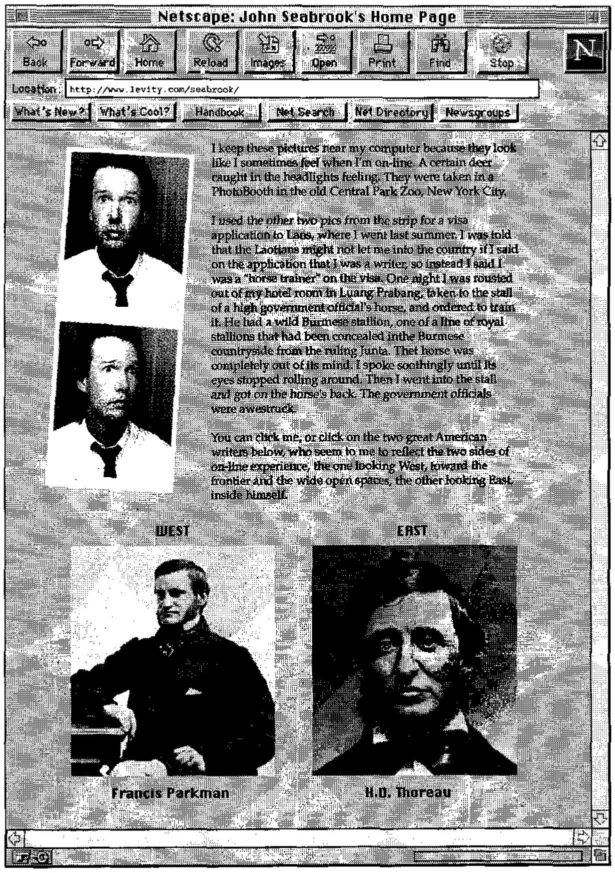
HOME ON THE NET

E-mail was last year's way of communicating. This year, it's the Web site: a virtual home where millions can visit you.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

DURING my first year in boarding school, I lived in a large open room with thirty-five other thirteen-year-old boys. It was like a model built to observe aspects of primate behavior from above. Each boy had an alcove and a curtain to pull in front of it, but the other boys did not regard what was within the boundaries of that cloth-and-plywood square as your personal space. These days, other people, like my fellow third formers, can wander in and out of my on-line personal space almost at will. In going on-line, you make some of your personal space available to other people; that is partly the point of the exercise. In this sense, on-line home life is closer to socialism than anything most people in the United States experience at home. At Brook Farm, the famous transcendentalist experiment in communal living which existed in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, in the eighteen-forties, the main community building was called the Hive—the same metaphor that Kevin Kelly uses in his recent book, "Out of Control," to describe social life on computer networks.

A home in the real world is, among other things, a way of keeping the world out. If you buy space in what used to be a warehouse, gut it, and hire someone to turn it into a home, as my wife and I did, you invite the world into your life for a while, but when the work is done you have walls and a threshold. Of course, you never shut the world out entirely, just as we will never get rid of all the little packets of sugar that the guys who built our loft brought along on the job with their coffee, but at least you have your privacy. It's like being inoculated with a little bit of the world, which makes you better able to survive the whole world.



Location: http://www.levity.com/seabrook/

I keep these pictures near my computer because they look like I sometimes feel when I'm on-line. A certain deer caught in the headlights feeling. They were taken in a PhotoBooth in the old Central Park Zoo, New York City.

I used the other two pics from the strip for a visa application to Laos, where I went last summer. I was told that the Laotians might not let me into the country if I said on the application that I was a writer, so instead I said I was a "horse trainer" on the visa. One night I was rousted out of my hotel room in Luang Prabang, taken to the stall of a high government official's horse, and ordered to train it. He had a wild Burmese stallion, one of a line of royal stallions that had been concealed inthe Burmese countryside from the ruling Junta. Thet horse was completely out of its mind. I spoke soothingly until its eyes stopped rolling around. Then I went into the stall and got on the horse's back. The government officials were awestruck.

You can click me, or click on the two great American writers below, who seem to me to reflect the two sides of on-line experience, the one looking West, toward the frontier and the wide open spaces, the other looking East, inside himself.

Hot buttons on my home page are pictures of me, Francis Parkman, and Henry David Thoreau.

DEEPURR

An on-line home, on the other hand, is a little hole you drill in a wall of your real home to let the world in. E-mail, chat, postings, and other forms of computer-based communication that I engage in while slouched in my faux-corduroy padded chair, with a PowerBook on my lap, are like the coded tap-

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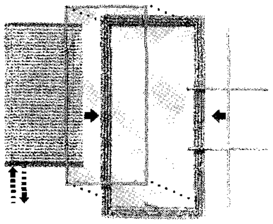

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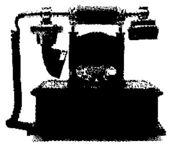

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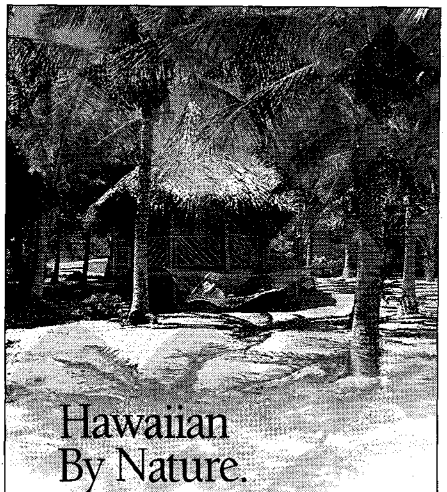

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International Herald Tribune
THE WORLD'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

pings on the walls of adjoining prison cells in Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon." An on-line home built for solitude doesn't make sense, maybe because people tend to be alone in front of their computers when they log on.

Building a home on-line means setting up some sort of private space for yourself within the public space of the network. By private space I mean the intimate airways of an E-mail exchange, which is like the space that is filled by a telephone conversation. Now there is a new kind of on-line private space: you can have what's called a "home page" on the World Wide Web. The Web is technically only a part of the Internet (the Web is a graphics-intensive application running on top of the Net's operating system), but it seems to be rapidly taking over the Net, and one day soon the Net as we know it may look like a horse-drawn carriage next to the Web's Model T. No one owns the Web, but anyone can own space on it: the space is cheap and, theoretically, infinite.

Cyberspace also makes available abundant public space—common areas where small or large numbers of people can gather. These public spaces might be "chat rooms," where people can talk with each other in real time; or they might be "forums," where people contribute postings to discussions organized around a topic; or they might be group game-playing spaces known as MUDs and MOOs. Unlike telephone space, these public spaces often contain a record of past conversations, and as this record grows over time it becomes a history. Then the history is shaped into an ideology. It is interpreted and reinterpreted. It means something.

Within the public spaces, private communication is also possible. Private and public modes of discourse are the Sheetrock and sealing compound from which an on-line home is made. A seventeen-year-old friend of mine has found a home in a role-playing room on America Online. A while ago, he met a girl there, Melynda, who, unlike many female users, actually gives Melynda as her user name. Now whenever he logs on to A.O.L. he uses the "member online" function to see if Melynda is signed on. If she is, they jointly open a private chat window on their screens and type messages to each other while watching the group discussion scroll past in another window. (While they are chatting, other people in the public room often send Melynda rude messages like "Hey, Melynda, want to play my flute?"—because Melynda says in her member profile that she is a flautist.) Part of what they discuss in their private space is the stuff that people are saying in the public window. They're like junior-high kids meeting at their lockers and watching other students pass by in the hall.

When I first went on-line, the nomadic quality of existence in cyberspace was a big part of the appeal. It was like taking an extended camping trip in the backcountry of a national park: You follow a path through the wilderness, and when you reach the designated campsite, or when you get tired, or when the weather turns ugly, you unpack and put up your high-tech geodesic dome for the night. In the morning, you stuff your home into its nylon sack and move on.

But after a while I got tired of camping out and started looking for a place to settle down. For me, finding a home on-line has meant finding a group small enough to resolve itself into a social organization I could become a part of. I began house hunting on the WELL, one of the older computer conferencing systems. Some of the earliest members on the WELL lived on the Farm, a commune in Tennessee, back in the seventies. Stewart Brand, who helped found the WELL, recruited people from the Farm specifically because of their communal-living experience. Brand says they brought a lot of lessons to the WELL: "Don't overwork and underappreciate the females, or they leave, and then the party's over. Don't invest much in a charismatic leader: he will steal everything you've got and then blame you for not having any more. It takes more than a sharp stick and earnestness to make a garden produce food. Don't piss off the neighbors. Stuff like that." Cliff Figallo, a Farm recruit, has written on the WELL about life on the Farm:

> We were very much into Truth, and at times we wielded it like a bludgeon. It was for their own good, of course, but it felt so good to lay a big fat TRUTH on someone. Almost as good as it felt bad to have one laid on you. Some folks (we called people "folks," folks) were "tennis ball eaters." You would serve up your best, most compassionately worded explanation about how and why they were assholes, and for a return you would get some lame reply that

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– Claus A. Froh

sounded like they deliberately missed the point. Grrr, that was frustrating. Especially when you were staying up until 2AM just to "get into their thing"; and it was for their own good!

That resonates with aspects of my home life on the WELL. Looking for a home there has involved learning to get along with the neighbors, and some neighbors have been zealous about seeing to it that I do. On-line, good fences do not necessarily make good neighbors. This also reminds me of boarding school. In my second year, we were given rooms with walls, but by then the walls were just symbols of boundaries that had already been established in that big open room.

WHAT exactly is a home page? In the simplest terms, it is like an E-mail address, a place on the Net where people can find you; but whereas an E-mail address is just a mailbox, a home page is a reception area. Although building home pages or Web sites (a collection of pages of which the home page is the natural starting point) is mainly a commercial enterprise, it doesn't have to be. It's also a way to meet people. You want guests to have a good time when they visit your home page, and you hope they will take away a favorable impression of you. You can link your home page to the home pages of friends or family, or to your employer's Web site, or to any other site you like, creating a kind of neighborhood for yourself. And you can design your page in any way you wish, and furnish it with anything that can be digitized—your ideas, your voice, your causes, pictures of your scars or your pets or your ancestors. You can have a professional photographer come and take pictures of your apartment, and then upload those pictures onto the Web, or you can just describe your day. You can describe your upstairs neighbor's day, as one Web denizen does on his home page:

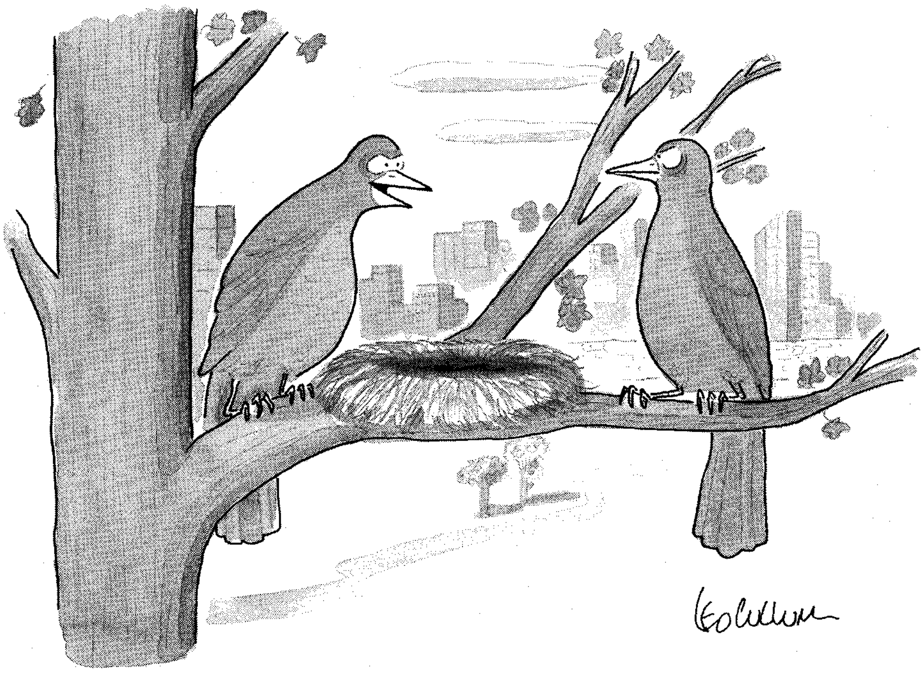
> Friday February 24, 1995
> Loser woke up early as usual and took his twenty minute shower. Then silence. The slow, laborious clockwise pacing began and continued until he had to leave for classes. A short phone call was made as is done every morning. Either he was calling "stooge" or he was checking in with his mommy. I left and did not get in until after 11pm. I thought that Loser might have gone out somewhere. Within a few minutes Loser got up and started pacing around. It is Friday night, for goodness sakes! Finally, he either sits down or goes to bed. Nope, he's back up again. He has to take a whiz.

If you want a really slick-looking home page, you can hire a professional Web designer to build and maintain one for you, or you can do it yourself, with whatever materials you happen to have around. At first, that was my plan—a handyman special. Although I am not "technical," the programming language you use to write for the Web, H.T.M.L., is not very difficult to learn. I bought a book called "Teach Yourself Web Publishing with H.T.M.L. in a Week," by Laura Lemay. But the time I might have invested in studying the book I instead spent on-line, and although the book still sits within reach on my desk, I suspect it may eventually find its own home near the various do-it-yourself books I bought back when we were renovating our loft and never used.

So I decided to hire someone to build my home page for me—an interior designer of virtual space. Web designers—or, as they are called when they also maintain the pages, Webmasters—are much in demand these days, especially in Manhattan. They tend to be young cyberslackers who learned H.T.M.L. in college and are now finding that harried business executives, having been handed the job of setting up their companies' Web sites, are desperately trying to hire people in the know to build their Web sites for them. At the same time, a growing number of designers from the print and TV media are getting into Web work. One of these people, a former book editor named Dan Levy, happens to be a friend of mine. I called Dan and asked him if he would help me build my home page, and although he was busy preparing a proposal to build a Web site for a division of Sony Electronics (the proposal itself was a Web site), he offered to come over one morning and help me raise my virtual roof beam.

Dan arrived, wearing shorts and a T-shirt and carrying his software tools and his PowerBook in a cloth bag. I showed him into my study. He sat down with my PowerBook and began loading floppies into the disk drive and installing the software necessary for the job. I watched his moves on the keyboard, trying to pick up some new software shortcuts through the Macintosh operating system.

While Dan was working, he said, "This Web stuff is just exploding. It's kind of ridiculous. The Spin Doctors Web site I did last year would be worth over ten thousand dollars now." Dan had to speak loudly because a garbage truck was hauling rubble from an interminable renovation job on the Smith Barney building across the street. He went on, "I think the situation is that some people in the big-media world just view it as a problem now—like, 'We need a Web site, here's some money, go



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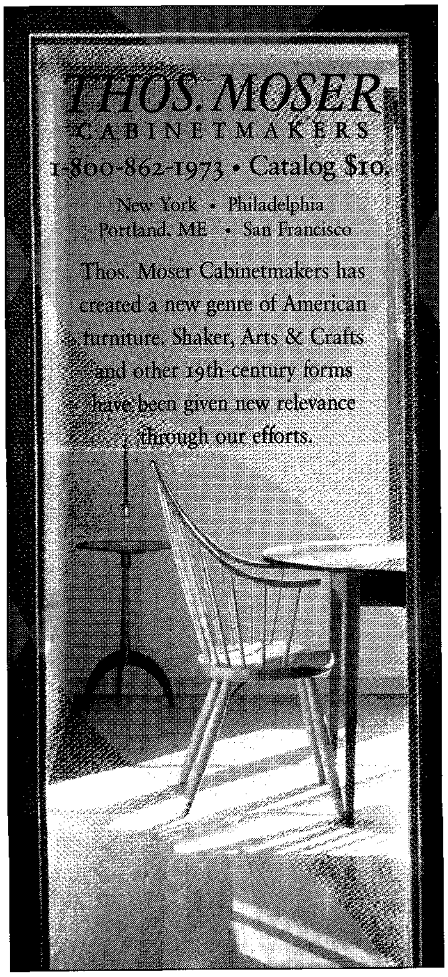

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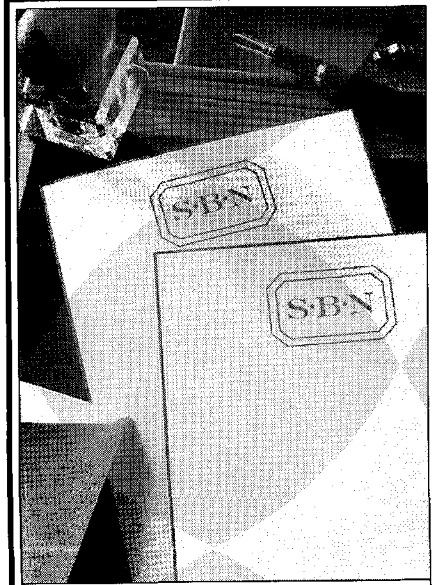

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> The home page is somewhat like a hyperactive electronic resume. It's designed to tell anyone who looks about who I am and what I do. I personally prefer to do that with text, and use graphics as attention grabbers, but some people like to paste up tons of pictures.
>
> Entertainment is important, too. My home page is the first impression of me complete strangers get on the net. Hopefully, they'll find it interesting, and entertaining, and maybe even useful. I don't want them to find a boring page and think I'm a boring person. There's also a bit of pride at stake. It's a great feeling to get e-mail from someone in Australia you've never met complimenting you on your home page. It's also a thrill to find your home page listed on someone else's page, especially when you don't know them.

I wrote back:

> So do you use it as a resume? Do you refer prospective employers to it? Or is it more like a resume for social life on the net, where the difference between business and pleasure, information and experience, advertising and editorial seems blurred?

He replied:

> I personally don't use it as a resume, nor would I refer employers to it as it isn't particularly businesslike. The main page itself is mostly a short bio with some contact information, and the other pages are mostly links of various sorts. In that sense, it is a "resume for social life"—or perhaps more of a "travel diary" (yet another metaphor)—the equivalent of the slide show of the places you've been on vacation.

One popular home page, called "The Spot" and recently voted Cool Site of the Year on the Web, is ostensibly the work of six people who share a beach house in L.A. They offer various intimate details of their "real" home life on their Web home page.

Carrie, on September 26th:

> So, last night, I decided I was going to have sex with Stacey. Just do it and get it over with. (Romantic, isn't it.) I didn't want to tell him ahead of time. I thought I would surprise him. I sneaked into Lon's room and stole a condom, just to be extra safe. . . . Stacey came over to watch the tape of the "Mad About You" season premiere. (Excellent. Helen Hunt is my idol.) TV led to kissing, which led to petting, which then led to more. . . . Without going into all the gory details, the bottom line is that I couldn't do it. Maybe the timing wasn't right.

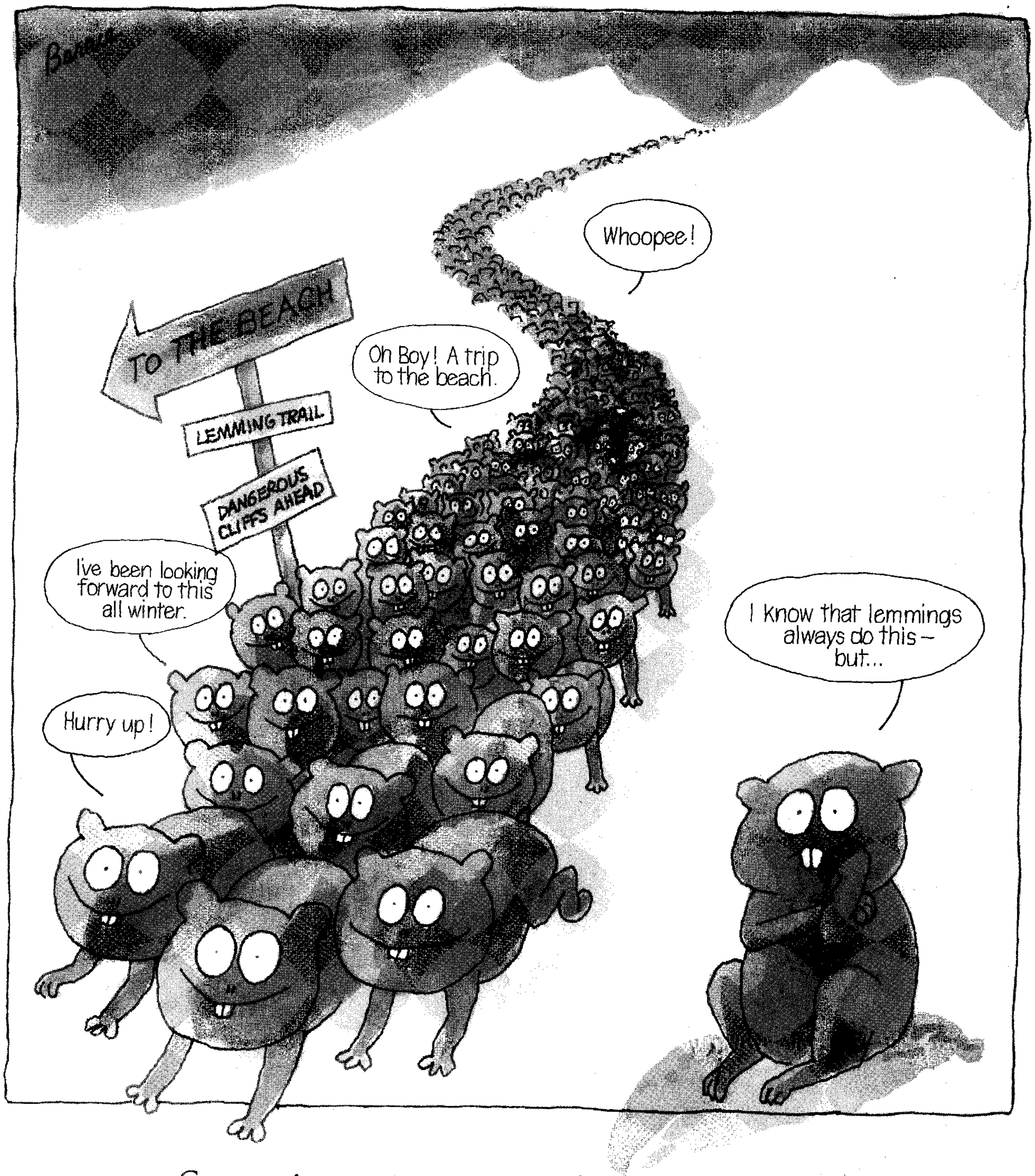
In some of the journal entries, the Spotmates try to make sense of why they are publishing their journals on-line in the first place. Lon writes:

> The journal entries have been extremely therapeutic, as has my correspondence with the Spot surfers of the world. . . . But the privacy I've given up is beginning to fuel my paranoia about everything in my world outside of the computer.

It is easy to see the content of many home pages as evidence of the further decline of civilization, although the shocking uses to which typography was put in its early days—bawdy stories, of which Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" is the most famous example, and unsanctioned translations of the Bible—are well documented. And amid the noise on the Web you can also hear the authentic voice of youthful idealism, which is harder to find in print and on TV, where young voices are so thoroughly marinated in irony. The most celebrated callow youth on the Web is probably Justin Hall, a twenty-year-old junior at Swarthmore, whose "Justin's Links from the Underground" is a famous site. Among the odds and ends found under "Justin's Writings" is this cyber-rap:

> Go out into your neighborhood and do a video documentary!
>
> Stage a play on a street corner! Strike up a conversation! Read a poem on a train!
>
> Then, write about it on your web page.
>
> Remember the first time you had sex? How strange that was? Write about it. Put it online.
>
> Remember the first time you were dumped? How shitty that was? Write about it. Put it online.
>
> I'd sooner read that than Barry Diller's five means of media ascension.
>
> Culture doesn't come from Warner Brothers and Sony. Culture is that woman friend of yours who tells the most outrageous stories.
>
> Culture doesn't cost big bucks, and hang in a gallery of modern art. Culture is your friend who likes to draw. . . .
>
> The web is an opportunity to make good our fifteen megabytes of fame.
>
> The more widespread and grassroots the Internet, the more difficult it will be to dominate and control it. You can contribute directly to the humanizing of the wires by telling your story, adding your persona to the unaffiliated.

BY the time of Dan's visit I had come up with a plan for my home page. I wanted to make something out of the media flooding into my study—to take the words and sounds and pictures and "repurpose" them, as they say on-line. I explained this to Dan and showed him a strip of pictures of myself that I had sitting around on my desk. Could I put this up and add a description of where the strip was taken, and make it hot, so that if you clicked on it you could learn some more things about me? Dan said sure, and that he would scan the pictures for me back at his place. Then, at the bottom of the page, I wanted to put the words "West" and "East" and, under the



TO THE BEACH
LEMMING TRAIL
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Whoopee!
Oh Boy! A trip to the beach.
I've been looking forward to this all winter.
Hurry up!
I know that lemmings always do this – but...

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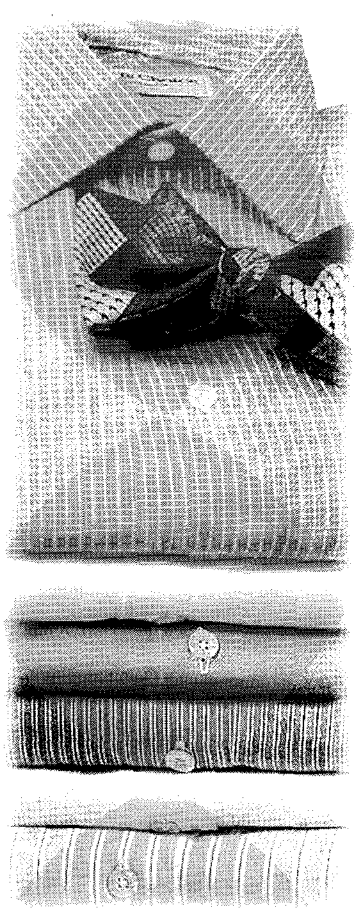

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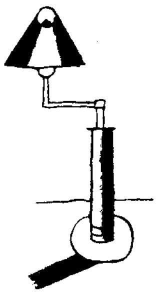
words, pictures of Francis Parkman and Henry David Thoreau, respectively. Both Parkman and Thoreau would be hot, too. If you clicked on Parkman, you'd go out to the American frontier, as he did in his great book "The Oregon Trail," and you'd see a picture of a buffalo hunt, and you could read some of my musings about the nature of public space on-line. If you clicked on Thoreau, you'd go to a cabin in the woods, and there you'd find more musings—these on the nature of inner space on-line and what Thoreau might have made of all this. I would link my Thoreau room to the Thoreau Society's on-line publication, and I'd link my Parkman room to the National Parks' Web site. Maybe I'll be redecorating in a few months, but the Thoreau/Parkman scheme would display my current obsessions.



Sitting in my study, Dan converted what I had written into H.T.M.L. When he was finished, he looked at my pictures, which he had to measure in pixels—the units of space that pictures occupy in the virtual world—and asked, "Do you have a ruler?" A ruler! I got one out of a drawer in which artifacts of my pre-electronic work life have accumulated—a personalized letter embosser; a rubber stamp that my wife, Lisa, hand-carved for me; a Cross pen set that my dad gave me—and handed it to Dan. He laid it on my photographs, measured them, pulled the calculator down from the Apple menu on my PowerBook, and said, "Let's see. That's one and three-quarters inches, and seventy-two pixels per inch—that's a hundred and twenty-six pixels."

While Dan was working, Lisa came out of her study. I watched the shadow of her door as it swung open, making changing shapes on the hallway floor. And as I watched this some of the excitement I was feeling about setting up my home page dwindled. Nothing on my computer screen seemed as substantial as this shadow, or the simple arc of space that the edge of the door described. When Lisa and I were designing our place, we were about to get married, and imagining the space became a way of configuring what we wanted our future together to be like. What started out as an open floor plan soon grew walls, making discrete blocks of space, which the architect called "living area," "bedroom," "Lisa's room," and "John's room." The most unstable element in the design was the positioning of these two rooms, our private studies, which kept swelling and shrinking and moving as we changed our minds about whether we should work near one another or at opposite ends of the loft. We ended up next to each other, and Lisa's doorway is a hot button for me.

After saying hi, Lisa went down toward the living area, and Dan swivelled back to my home page. He copied the document, opened it with Netscape, which is a popular program for browsing the Web, clicked "Reload," and then dialled in to his Web server from my PowerBook. All that remained was for him to upload my site onto one of his computers, but we got stuck waiting for something to happen, which is a drawback of using the Web with an ordinary phone line. (The wires aren't yet fat enough for the heavy load of bits streaming through them.) Sitting side by side in front of the small screen made eye contact difficult, and the tension of the waiting constricted conversation. After what seemed like an unusually long time, Dan said, "Uh-oh, is my server down? Where's your phone?" Although Dan's office is in Manhattan, some of his computers are in a renovated warehouse on 137th Street at Willow Avenue, in the Bronx. While we were waiting for someone to pick up, Dan told me about a friend's recent scare: An employee had stolen two of the friend's computers. After he confronted the employee, someone called his office and said, "If you want your computers, they are sitting under the bridge around the corner."

"Well, why did the guy steal them at all?" I asked.

Dan said, "Because that's the state of despair his life is in."

Finally, Dan reached someone who was with the machines and reported that they seemed to be working fine. We tried again, and this time we got through. Dan uploaded my home page onto his server, tweaked my links for me, and told me my Web address, which is http://www.levity.com/seabrook/. "All right," Dan said. "You have a home. All within the comfort of your own home."

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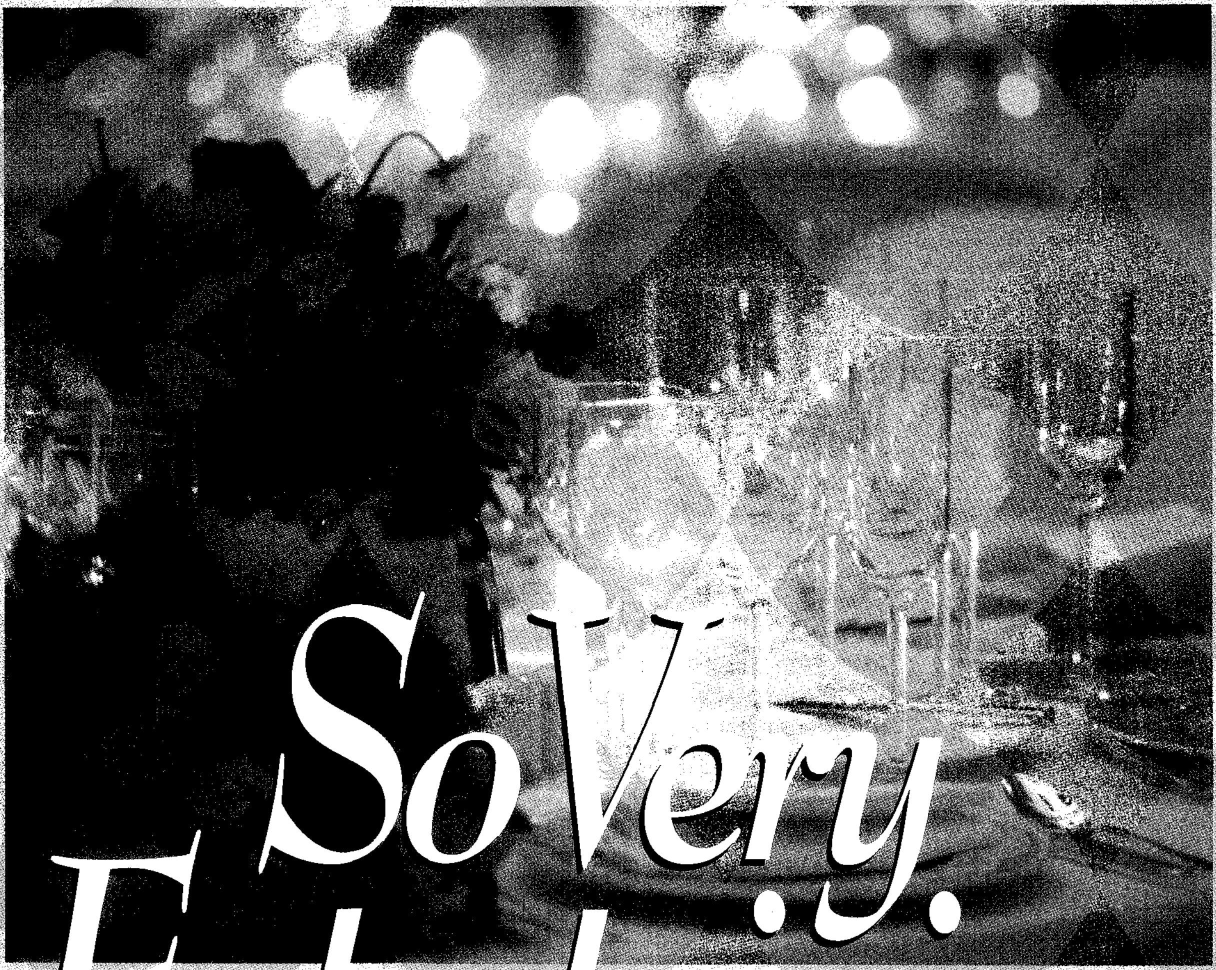

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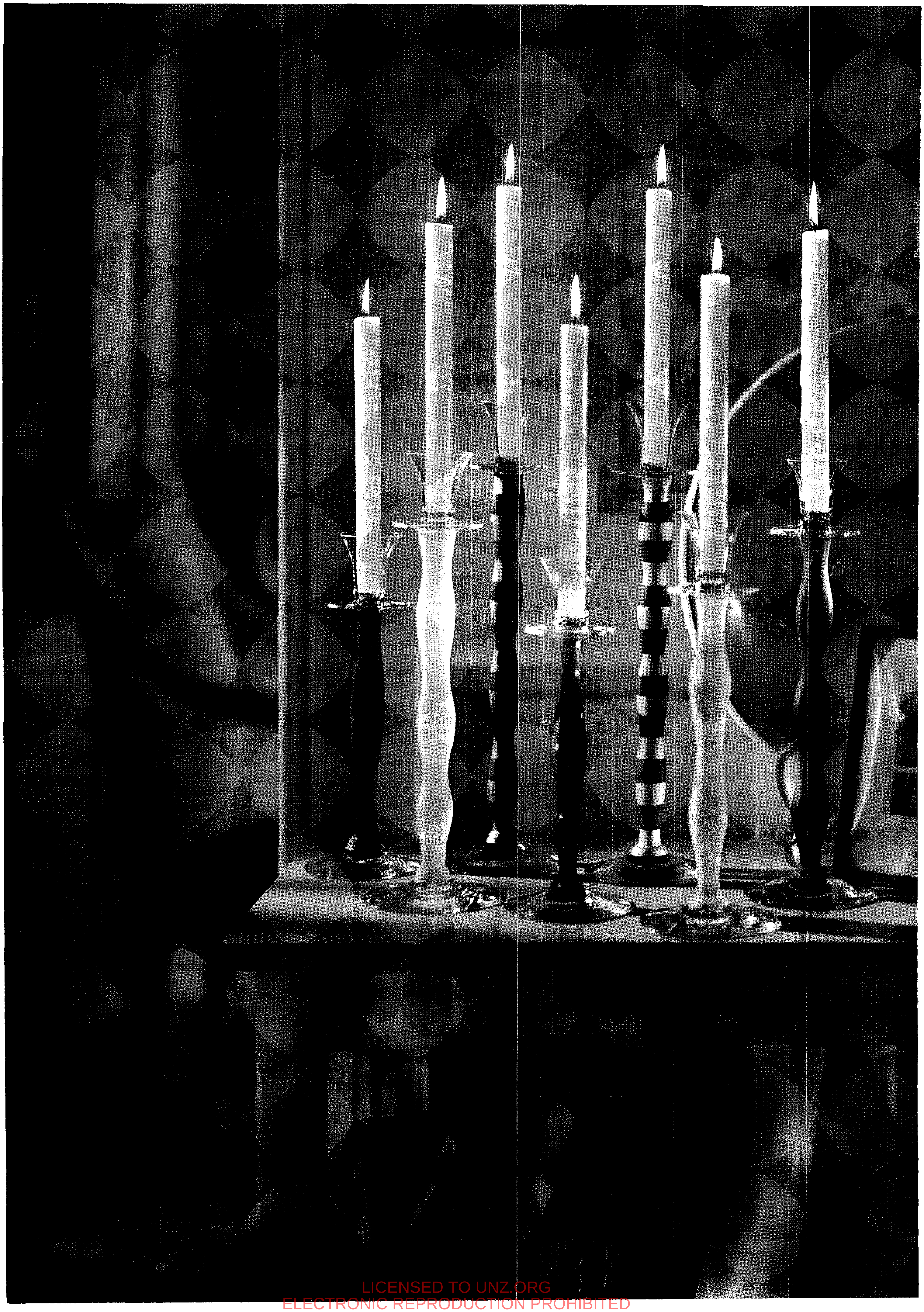

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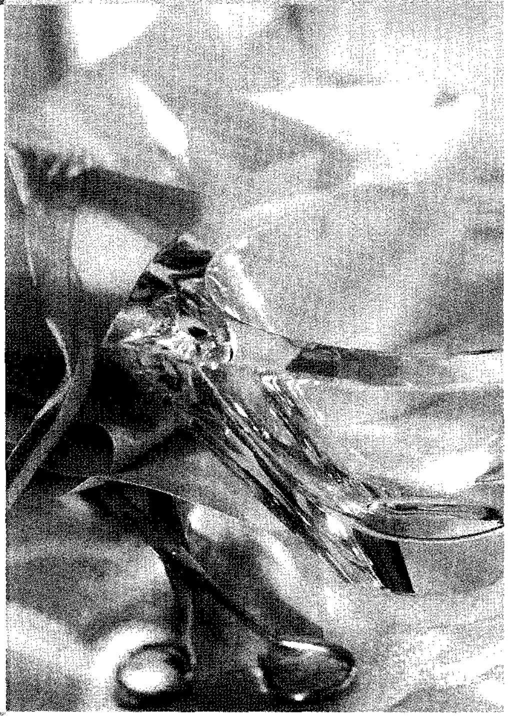

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Guess Who's Coming for Dinner?

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So who would you have over for dinner if the world were your oyster? "George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Samuel Johnson, and Harriet Beecher Stowe," says Jane Smiley without hesitation: "I love dinner parties with writers." Smiley, herself a novelist (*Moo*), continues, "Writers talk the way musicians jam: They simultaneously collaborate and show off their verbal and anecdotal powers." Smiley, who loves riding, would also include the Aga Khan "so we could have some horse talk" and Xenophon, the Greek military author who also wrote about horses. "I'd seat him next to the most erudite, who would be George Eliot—she'd know the most about Greek literature."

"I always like to have a little theme in mind," says fashion designer Cynthia Rowley, who, given her druthers, would host a potluck with Julia Child, Wolfgang Puck, Betty Crocker, Frank Purdue, The Frugal Gourmet, and Sara Lee. Potlucks, explains Rowley, have "a nice homey feeling; they're not about impressing." Who better to invite than food connoisseurs? "I'd seat myself between Julia Child, because I think she's a riot, and Betty Crocker, because I could use the tips," says Rowley.

Food mavens would also show up at the home of Peri Wolfman, owner of the SoHo shop, Wolfman-Gold & Good Co. She'd invite Terrence Conran, restaurateur and retailer, producer Ismail Merchant, author of a cookbook on Florence, Alice Waters, the chef, her daughter Fanny, Laura Esquirel (*Like Water for Chocolate*), and her kids. "I love multigenerational parties," says Wolfman, who, when she entertains, often sets a place for her sons at her long pine table. "If you seat a younger person next to an older one, he finds a mentor," she explains, "and the older person finds a new point of view. Everyone gains."

Cognizant that conversation should "flit like a butterfly around the table," decorator Charlotte Moss has come up with a guest list that insures flitting: Thomas Jefferson, Cole Porter, Edith Wharton, Marie Antoinette, and Cristobal Balenciaga, the fashion designer. Moss would seat Wharton on her left and talk decorating, Jefferson on her right and reminisce about Virginia, where she's from. "If you keep the conversation light—not superficial—everyone has a good time because they all can contribute," she says.

Oscar Wilde, the Truman Capote of the nineteenth century, would be at the table of novelist Francine Prose (*Household Saints, Hunters & Gatherers*) where he'd meet Rebecca West, Edgar Allen Poe ("for atmosphere"), Colette ("in order to watch her eat—with great enthusiasm"), Balzac, an

The Ultimate Party Mix Might Include

Oscar Wilde
Colette
Francine Prose
Balzac
Edgar Allen Poe
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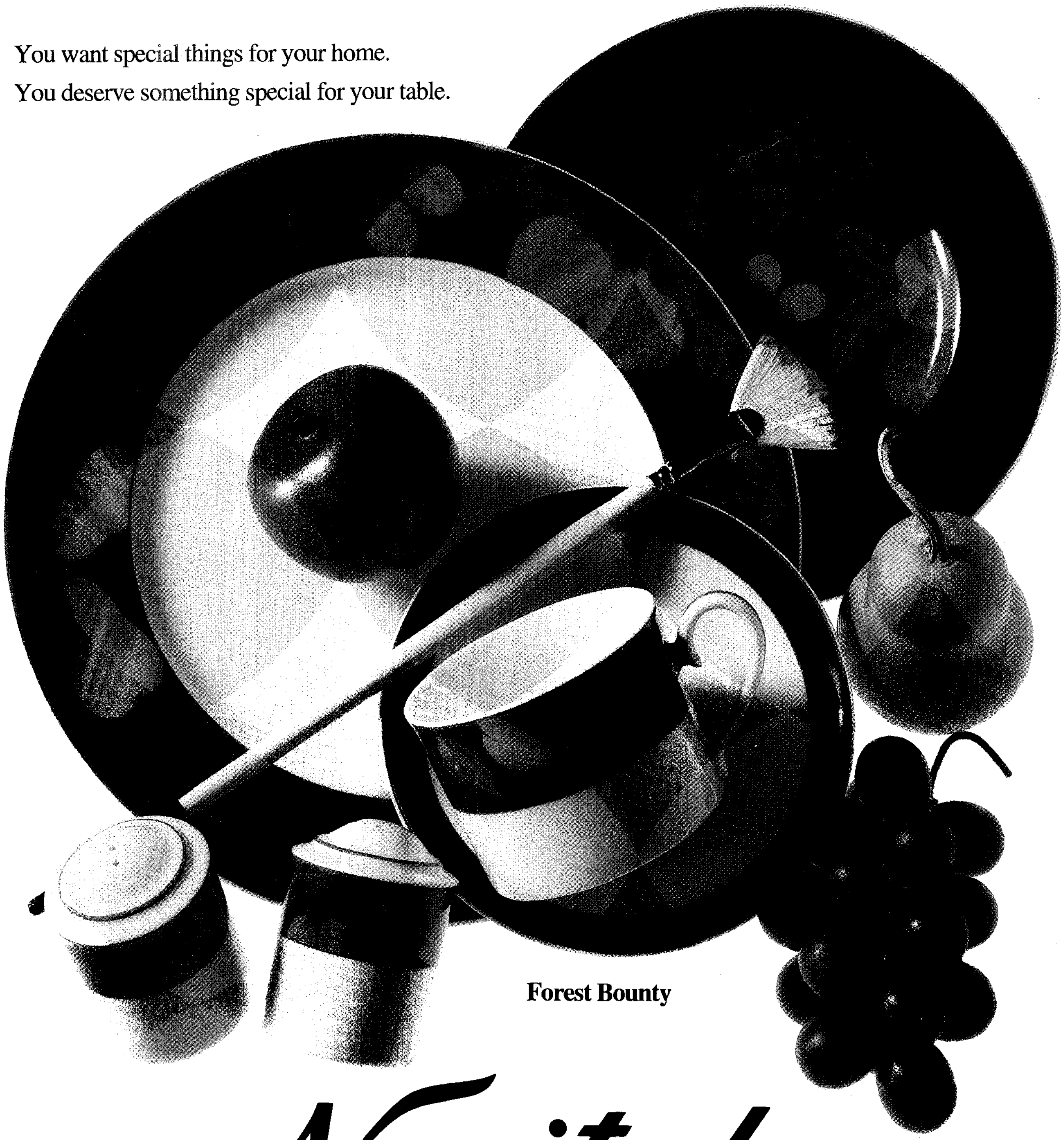

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appreciator of social nuance who "both loved and hated society—and who would both love and hate this party," and Jane Bowles.

The perfect mix, according to decorator Keith Irvine of Irvine & Fleming, brings together "people who are amusing, naughty, sexy, and sensible." Thus he'd invite Liam Neeson and Mae West ("they'd be catnip to everyone"), Cy Twombly, the painter, and Jean Cocteau ("to up the intellectual quotient"), Mary Queen of Scots, and the Duchess of Windsor, "who would have a lot to talk about because they were both almost Queen." Finally, for "sensible ballast," he'd add in Sir Edwin Lutyens, his architectural hero, and Katherine Graham. "She's the present American equivalent of Queen Victoria. She's been around so long at the center of power that she's met everyone—on an equal level."

> THE PERFECT MIX? "PEOPLE WHO ARE AMUSING, NAUGHTY, SEXY, AND SENSIBLE."

Of course everyone wants someone at a dinner party who is a seasoned conversationalist. Mario Buatta, the decorator, favors an entire table of time-tested talkers—Truman Capote, Slim Keith, Babe Paley et al. "I'd call it my Before *Answered Prayers* Party," says Buatta.

A.R. Gurney, the playwright (*The Dining Room, Sylvia*), honestly doesn't know what would constitute the right mix, but he has given the wrong mix some thought. His new play, *The Fourth Wall*, centers on a dinner party to which a husband invites Tom Brokaw, Kitty Carlisle Hart, and Daryl Strawberry. "The husband is trying to impress his wife with a very exciting, New York-y party," says Gurney. The wife, however, is too P.C. for such froth. She spends the evening in the bathtub reading *The New Republic* and singing "If I Had A Hammer."

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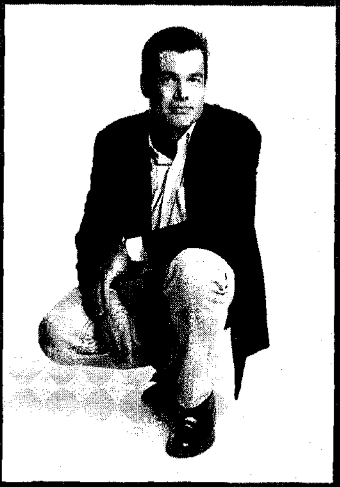
The Well-Dressed Table



Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

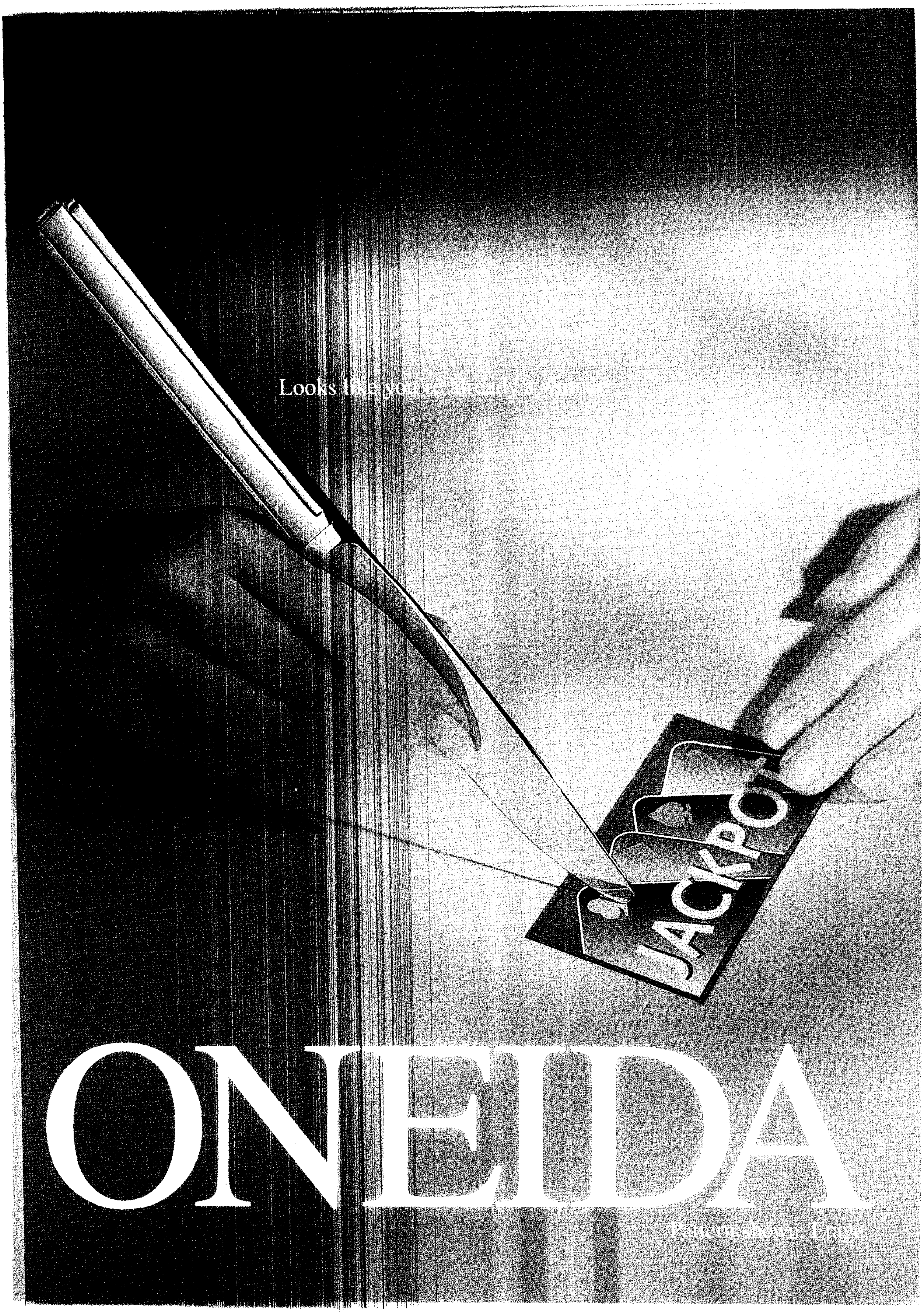
What is the well-dressed table wearing this season? Something natural, something personal, according to Robert Isabell, the florist of florists responsible for everything from the Miller wedding to the opening party for *George*. "The biggest trend now," he says, "is toward very simple things you can do yourself, as opposed to the eighties sort of elaborateness."

Centerpieces he likes: a bouquet of colored leaves, a wood bowl filled with lady apples or sickle pears, bittersweet gathered from the woods, a basket of branches and moss. Arrangements should be low and flowers should be "of the season"—zinnias in rich autumn colors, jewel tone dahlias "without any white or yellow mixed in."

Place cards, whether engraved or handwritten by the children, are a plus. "They eliminate that awkward moment when everyone stands around wondering where to sit."

Service plates? Of course. "There should never be a blank spot at the table," says Isabell. Though silver is nice, service plates can range from wicker to large tropical leaves. They needn't match the china, which in turn, needn't coordinate from course to course. "Mix your patterns," advises Isabell.

Faux pas to avoid: tables that are too large—"guests have a much better time sitting close together"; upholstered chairs ("with a hard-backed chair, people will sit up and talk"); and overlighting, a terror matched only by "bad food and loud guests." Isabell's remedy: put every light, even the chandelier, on a dimmer. "If it's still too bright, light the entire room with candles. Do an experiment a few nights before at the hour you'll be entertaining. Add canister lights with pink bulbs to wash the walls if you need them. Candlelight is the most stunning effect you can get, even if you're only serving dinner for six in a tiny room. It says 'this is a great occasion.'"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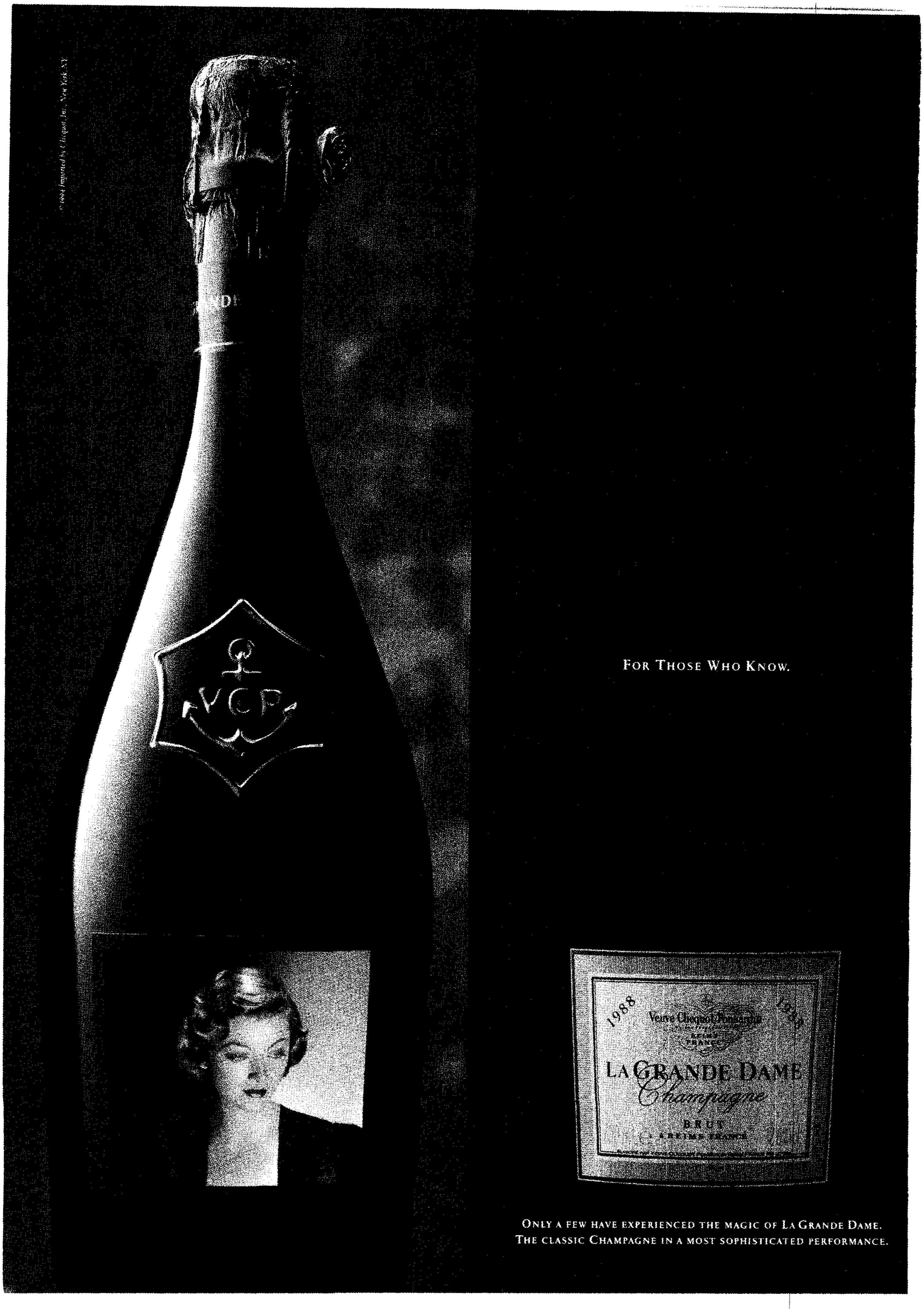
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THE WAY WE LIVED

THE CHICKEN TOWER

The author's family farm in Kentucky recalls a way of life that is disappearing fast.

BY BOBBIE ANN MASON

IT is late spring, and I am pulling pondweed. My mother likes to fish for bream and catfish, and the pondweed is her enemy. Her fishing line gets caught in it, and she says the fish feed on it, ignoring her bait. "That old pondweed will take the place," Mama says. All my life I've heard her issue this dire warning. She says it of willow trees, spiderwort, snakes, and Bermuda grass. "That old Bermudy" won't leave her flower beds alone.

The pondweed is lovely. If it were up to me, I'd just admire it and let the fish have it. But then, I'm spoiled and lazy and have betrayed my heritage as a farmer's daughter by leaving the land and going off to see the world. Mama said I always had my nose in a book. I didn't want to have to labor the way my parents did. But here I am, on a visit, wrestling with pondweed.

Looming over the old farmhouse, a feed mill now casts its image of relentless urbanization on the Kentucky countryside.

JOHN COLLIER

I'm working with a metal-toothed rake, with a yellow nylon rope tied to the handle to extend its reach. I stand on the pond bank, my Wal-Mart Wellingtons slopping and sucking mud. I fling the rake as far as I can, catch the pondweed, and then tug it loose. An island of it breaks off and comes floating toward me, snared by the rake. I haul it in and heave it onto the bank. The pondweed is a heavy mass of white, fat tendrils and a black tangle of wiry roots beneath the surface scattering of green leaves. Along with my rakeful of weed comes a treasure of snails, spiders, water striders, crawfish, worms, and insect larvae—a whole ecosystem, as in a tide pool. I haul out as much as I can lift—waterlogged, shiny leaves, masses of roots, some of them thick and white like skinned snakes. I rescue a crawfish. It wriggles back into

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its mud tunnel. As I work, the bank gets clogged with piles of weed. I am making progress. There is an unexpected satisfaction in the full range of athletic motion required for this job. I think about hard labor and wonder whether some of my exercise-addicted friends who torture their bodies could be talked into helping me out.

Back in the seventies, my father hired a man with a bulldozer to create the pond so my mother could go fishing—her favorite pastime. He cut down a black-walnut tree so she could have a view of the pond across the field behind the house.

There used to be blackberries at the site of this quarter-acre pond—banks of berry bushes so enormous that we tunnelled through them and made a maze. The blackberries were what we called tame. Back in the forties, my parents planted a dozen or two bushes to keep the fields from washing into the creek. The blackberries spread along all the borders. The berries were large and luscious, not like the small, seedy wild ones, but we never ate them with cream and sugar—only in pies or jam. Every July, we picked berries and Mama sold gallons of them to high-toned ladies in the big fine houses in town. They made jelly. We got twenty-five cents for a quart of berries, a dollar a gallon. It took an hour to pick a gallon, and I could pick up to four gallons in a morning, before the sun got too hot, and before I got chiggers in the skin under my waistband. My fingers were full of thorn pricks and stayed purple all summer. The blackberries here haven't disappeared, but they used to be more accessible. They grew up and down all the creek banks, along the edges of all the fields, along the fencerows, along the lane. To fight the invasion of the blackberries my father burned down masses of them and dug the pond.

The pond feeds into Kess Creek, which cuts across this farm—the one where I grew up, and where my mother still lives. The farm is fifty-three acres, cut into six fields, with two houses along the frontage. We are within sight of the railroad, which parallels U.S. Highway 45. We're a mile from downtown Mayfield, county seat of Graves County, Kentucky. We are in far-western Kentucky, that toe tip of the state shaped by the curve of the great rivers—the

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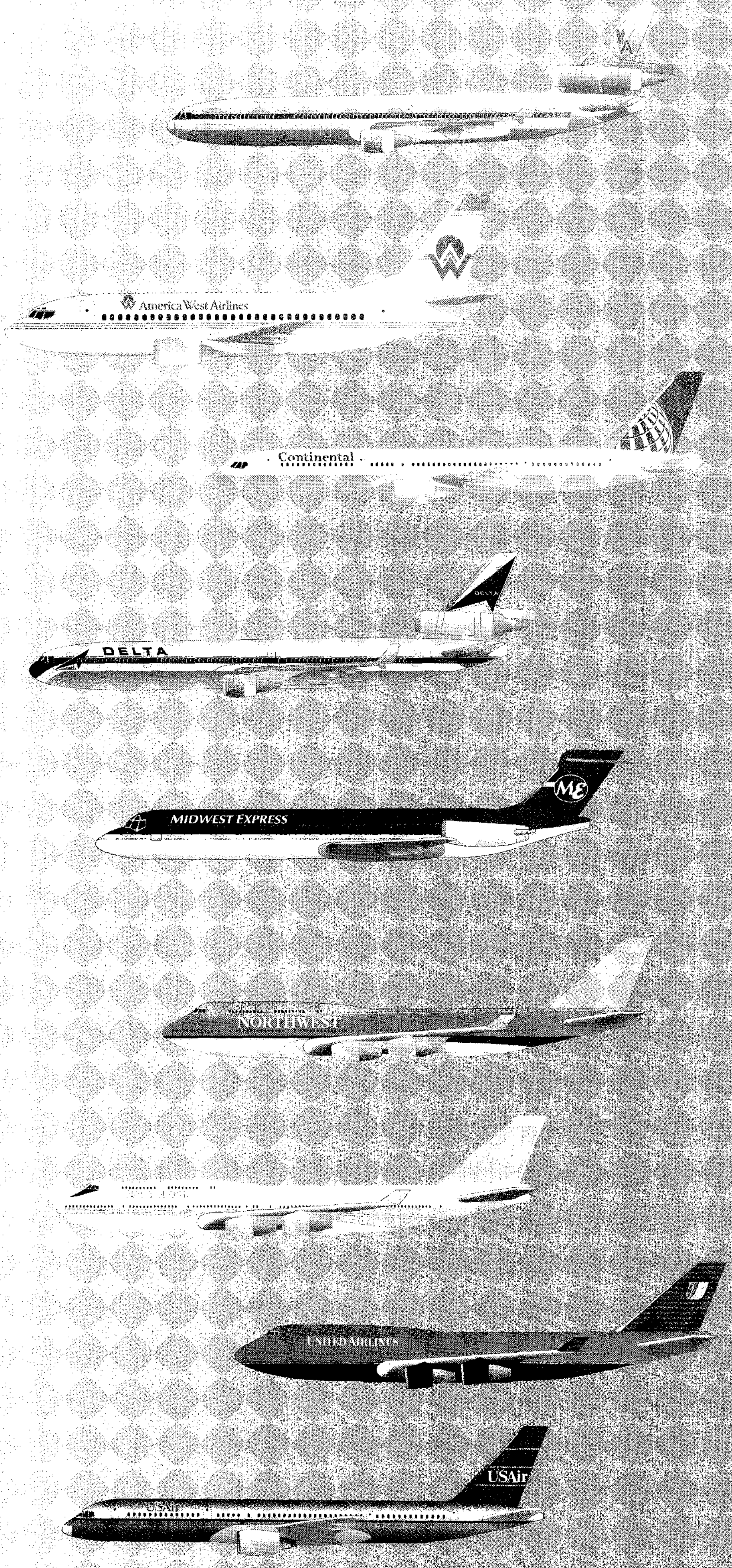

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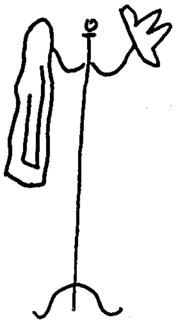
Ohio meets the Mississippi at Cairo, Illinois, about thirty-five miles northwest of Mayfield. To the east, the Tennessee and the Cumberland Rivers (now swelled into T.V.A. lakes) run parallel courses. Water forms this twenty-five-hundred-square-mile region into a peninsula. It's attached to land along the border with Tennessee. Historically and temperamentally, it looks to the South.

There aren't any big cities around, unless you count Paducah (pop. 26,853), twenty-six miles to the north. The farm is typical of this agricultural region. A lane cuts through the middle, from front to back, and two creeks divide it crosswise. The ground is rich, but it washes down the creeks. The creeks are clogged with trash, dumped there to prevent hard rains—gully-washers—from carrying the farm away. At one time, this was a thriving dairy farm that sustained our growing family. It was home to my paternal grandparents, my parents, my two sisters, my brother, and myself. There were at least eleven buildings along the front part of the farm, near the road: two houses, a barn, a stable, a corncrib, a smokehouse, two henhouses, a washhouse, a milk house, an outhouse. I even had a playhouse.



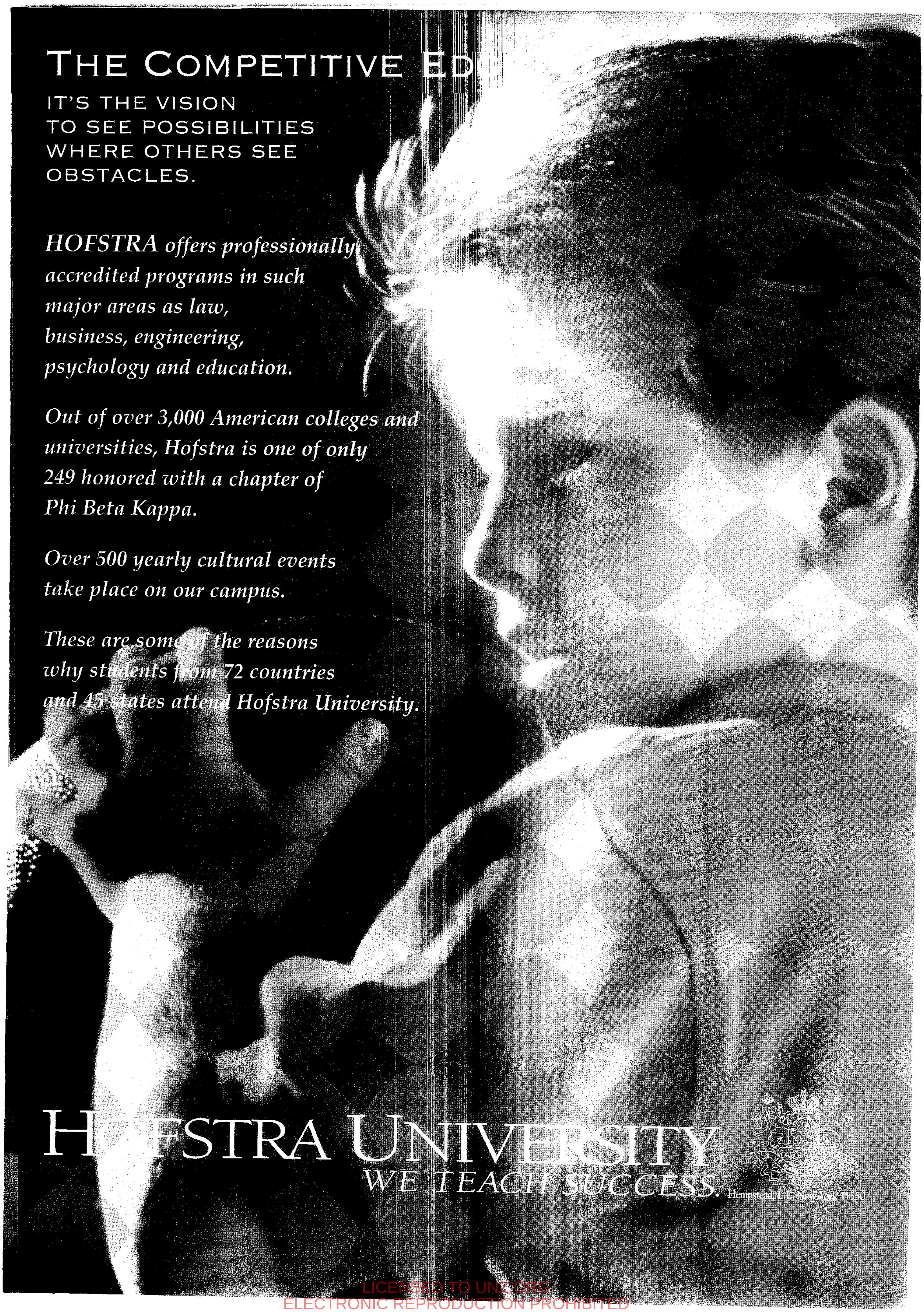
The gravel-and-mud county road ran in front. Sometimes the school bus couldn't get through the mud. Before the road was paved and fast cars started killing the dogs and cats, we would sit on my grandparents' porch and say "Who's that?" whenever anybody passed. My grandparents' house was a large, one-story building with a high gabled roof. The other house, a small white wood-frame house that my parents built when I was four, stood on a hill in the woods. Before the road was paved, the roadbed had been built up, so the house seemed to settle down to the level of the road, but we still say the house is on a hill.

The farm is one field to the east of the railroad track that used to connect New Orleans with Chicago. The track runs beside Highway 45, an old U.S. route that unites Chicago with Mobile, Alabama. Highway 45 goes past Camp Beauregard, a Civil War encampment and cemetery, and leads toward Shiloh, a Civil War battlefield, and continues to Tupelo, Mississippi, where Elvis Presley was born. On this highway, when I was about ten, my dog, Rags, was killed, smashed flat, and nobody bothered to remove his body. For a long time, it was still there when we went to town—a hank of hair and a piece of bone. It became a rag, then a wisp, then a spot. It's hard to explain the indifference of the family in this matter, for my heart ached for Rags. I think it had something to do with the immutability of fate. To my parents' way of thinking, there was nothing that could be done to bring Rags back to life, and, besides, they were behind on the spring planting or perhaps the fall corn gathering. There was always something.

When I was in junior high, a motel opened up on the highway. It was the first motel in Mayfield. I could see it from my house. Marlene lived at the motel. I envied her. The allure of rootlessness—strangers passing through, stopping there to sleep—is a cliché, but if you live within sight of trains and a highway, the cliché holds power. Marlene's father built her a frozen-custard stand—to my mind the definition of bliss. It was a cozy playhouse on the side of the open road: a safe thrill. But Marlene was popular at school and grew too busy for any sidelines. Her father put an ad in the paper: "For Sale: Marlene's Frozen-Custard Stand. Marlene's tired."

Long before this, back in 1896, across the field in front of our houses, an amazing thing happened. Mrs. Elizabeth Lyon gave birth to quintuplets. For a brief time, they were world-famous, until curiosity-seekers handled the babies to death. The quintuplets' house stood right beside the railroad track, and passengers from the train stopped to ogle. They were five boys—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul. The names had come to Mrs. Lyon in a dream. President Grover Cleveland and Queen Victoria sent congratulations on the babies.

I am a product of this ground. This region is called the Jackson Purchase. In 1818, Andrew Jackson signed a deal with Chinubby, king of the Chickasaw Nation, and soon white settlers swarmed



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in, snatching up sweeps of prairie. Most of them came from middle Tennessee, where the Cumberland Settlements had led to the founding of Nashville. One of the Cumberland pioneers was my great-great-great-grandfather, Samuel Mason. Several of his ten children headed for the Jackson Purchase, and two of them settled on Panther Creek, at Clear Springs, from whence all the relatives I have ever known sprang. In 1920, a century after my ancestors settled in Clear Springs, my grandparents boldly moved away from there, from the bosom of generations. The land had been divided up so many times by then that sons had to leave and find their own land. For Granddaddy, it was a long journey of eight miles. He bought the fifty-three and one-tenth acres by the highway for five thousand dollars. The house, only six years old, was sturdy and attractive. The land was cleared and fertile, and it was only a mile from town, so that trading at the town square or the feed mill involved an easy journey by buggy or wagon.

At one time, much of the land of the Jackson Purchase was covered with tall grass. The Chickasaws had apparently burned it periodically to create grassland for buffalo. When my father plowed in the spring, he turned up arrowheads. The land is not flat, and it's not at all hilly, either. It looks like English farmland. Does the landscape resemble England because of the natural lay of the land, or did the settlers impose their farming habits upon it? Today it has small fields, and the fencerows are thick with weeds, vines, oaks, hickories, and cedars.

The landscape is still changing. Not far from our farm, on the highway that leads from my birthplace to Elvis's, are a tobacco-processing outfit, a John Deere business, and a chicken hatchery. The little frozen-custard stand, fallen to other uses and then to ruin, was there until fairly recently, but the motel disappeared long ago. In its place is a collection of grim little buildings, including the House of Prayer. With the Jackson Purchase Parkway close by, industries have located near the interchange. My birthplace is now at the hub of industrial growth in the county, and the road in front of the houses is now a busy connector to highways and factories. When the cars rush by (ignoring the speed limit of thirty-five) on their way to work, or when a shift lets out, my mother will sometimes stand at the kitchen window and count them. "That's sixty-eight that have gone by in five minutes," she announces.

The farm now lies entirely within the city limits. To the east, the subdivisions are headed our way. Behind the farm, to the south, we can glimpse an air-compressor factory. Just across the railroad, to the west, the four-lane bypass leads around town and to the Parkway and to everywhere on the continent. Across the road, in a thirty-acre cornfield, which is like an extension of our front yard, is the landmark of the town.

I call it the chicken tower. It is the feed mill that processes feed for all the chickens that fuel Seaboard Farms, whose chicken-processing plant is on the other side of town. Construction workers came in 1989 and put up the tower in continuous twelve-hour shifts, while my father watched in fascination. The thing rose faster than growing corn. A chain-link fence girds the field. A deer was caught on the fence almost as soon as it went up.

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The tower is a tall, gray concrete structure, without windows. It's a hundred and fifty-six feet high. If you see it at dawn, it's hard not to think about a space-shuttle launch. Adjoining the chicken tower are six cylindrical towers, attached like booster rockets. The architecture is unrelievedly functional. The word "Soviet" comes to mind. The tower has a framework of pipes crawling over it, and the six cylinders that have earned the nickname "the concrete six-pack." These silos are a hundred and ten feet high.The mill hums, and big trucks come and go. It's like a huge refrigerator running. The chicken feed smells a bit like the mash of a whiskey distillery. The chicken industry, proliferating throughout the South, wildly promises prosperity, and many local farmers have grabbed the chance to raise chickens for Seaboard. The plant hatches the eggs and makes the feed, and the farmers provide chicken houses at their own expense. Then low-wage workers cut up and package "poultry products" when they're six weeks old and sporting their first full plumage.

Beyond the chicken tower is the site where the Lyon quintuplets were born, in 1896, and beyond that there's the feed mill where my mother's soybeans go, and beyond that is town. And then there's the wide world I eventually left home to see.

IT'S summer now. I am back again. With Oscar, the family dog, I'm visiting the pond on a warm evening, feeding fish. I'm flinging pellets of fish food out onto the water, trying to get it beyond the pondweed, which extends out all around the banks of the pond, except for the clearings I've made. When I pick up the empty fish-chow bucket—a plastic ice-cream tub—I find three crickets caught in it. They can't jump more than two or three inches straight up. There are two small ones and one medium-sized one. The smalls have striped backs like lightning bugs. They have feathery arms and legs and feathery feet. The large one has a long antenna it loops toward itself, then extends out tentatively, searching. The other antenna is grossly shortened, perhaps cut off by some vicious fighter bug. Or did it come like that? Suddenly I realize that looking at crickets this way is what it was like for me to be a child here, immersed in the strange particulars of nature.

From the pond, in the green lushness of early summer, in three directions, you see only fields of soybeans and corn and thick fencerows and washed skies. A movie could be filmed here, a historical drama set in 1825, and it would be just like this except for the soundtrack: the noises of the highway, the air, the feed mill; the blare and thud of music from cars whizzing past. If you turned the camera in the other direction, toward the road, you'd get all the visual cues of the present day—the wires and poles, the asphalt, the Detroit metal, the discarded junk-food wrappers and beer cans thrown from cars that have "twentieth century" written all over them. You would also see a brown farmhouse with two rickety outbuildings, a red stable, and a small white house in lovely woods that are manicured like a park. And you would see the chicken tower, lord of the landscape.

IN late September, Mama and I walk down the path to the pond. She uses her fishing rod to fight the weeds

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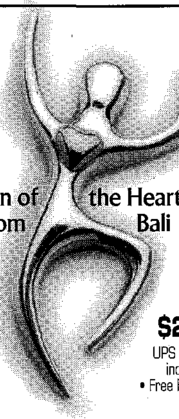

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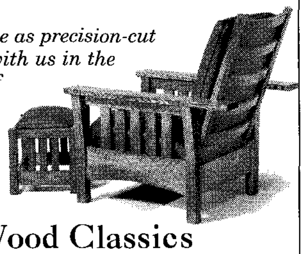

and snakes. Oscar trots along, thrilled to go with us. Miraculously, he never goes near the road.

"That's Johnsongrass," Mama says, pointing her rod at a clump of what looks like a trendy ornamental grass. "You can't ever get rid of that. Your Daddy used to cut it off and dig it up and dump it in the creek."

"What's that one?"

"Hogweed? Horseweed? I can't remember. But at the joint sometimes there's a big knot and inside is a worm that's good to fish with."

"It's horseweed," she says presently. "Not hogweed. Hogweed is what you call presley—pig presley I always called it. The hogs like it real well. It's got real tender leaves."

"Is that one of your weeds that will take the place?"

"No, pig presley's all right. It's good."

We reach the pond just as a small heron escapes in a slow-motion flight over the creek. The pondweed has died back a lot, and the reflections on the water are clear and still. The main house, inside its army of old oak and maple trees, is reflected in the pond. The chicken tower rises above the trees. The tableau is upside-down and innocently beautiful and abstract.

Mama gestures to the southeast and says, "If the wind is this way, I smell horse piss, and this way I smell cow mess, and over yonder it's tobacco curing, and from the north it's chicken feed." Her rod follows her directions. She laughs: her big, loud laugh. "If that don't beat a hen a-rootin'!" she says. Her laugh supposedly comes from her grandfather, Jimmo Lee, who had red hair and an Irish or Scottish burr in his voice. (Nobody remembers whether he was Irish or Scottish, but many of the settlers were Scots-Irish, an interestingly muddled identity.) Jimmo once said he went in a wagon "all the way yander to Newbraskie!" He was looking for land, as everyone was, but he returned to his people. My mother uses idioms that are dying out with her generation, right along with the small family farms of America. Her way of talking is the most familiar thing I know, except maybe for the contours and textures of this land. Mama's language comes from the borderlands of England and Scotland and from Northern Ireland, with some other English dialects thrown in, and it is mingled with African-American speech patterns acquired along the way. It's spoken, with variations, in a band of the upper South stretching from the mid-Atlantic states across the Appalachians to the Ozarks. In the Jackson Purchase, this old dialect rested in the farmlands and changed with the weather and the crops and the vicissitudes of history as news filtered in from other places. Right now, there's a good chance you won't hear many people under sixty say, "If that don't beat a hen a-rootin'." It's an expression that comes from a deep knowledge of chicken behavior. Mama has contended with many a settin' hen. On free-range chickens, she's an expert.

Mama casts out a long rubber lure, a sort of Gummie Worm, and reels it in. She's casting for bass. "I'd rather fish for bream because they bite like crazy," she says.

The beanfields are leased out to a neighbor, and Mama frets about their proper cultivation. Dense growth from the creeks is creeping out into the fields. She hates weeds, insects, snakes, and bad weather. And she rails against the haphazard and violent methods of mechanized farming. One year, she chopped out all the pokeweed that had infiltrated a soybean field. She was afraid the pokeberries would stain the feed. "Them beans would have been purple by the time they went through the mill!" she said. "I don't know if hogs would appreciate purple feed. And pokeberries is poison."

Now it's winter. A tree is down, blocking the path across the creek. It has split, rotten at the center. I remember when that little tree hollow was a good hiding place for secret messages in fantasy girl-sleuth games—forty years ago. At the creek, a jumble of memories rushes out, memories of a period in my own lifetime which links straight back to a century ago, and even further: hog-killing; breaking newground; gathering dried corn in the fall; herding cows with a dog; churning; quilting. I have a snapshot of myself as a child, sitting on a mule. I know the textures of all these experiences.

What happened to me and my generation? What made us leave home and abandon the old ways? Why did we lose our knowledge of nature? Why wasn't it satisfying? Why would only

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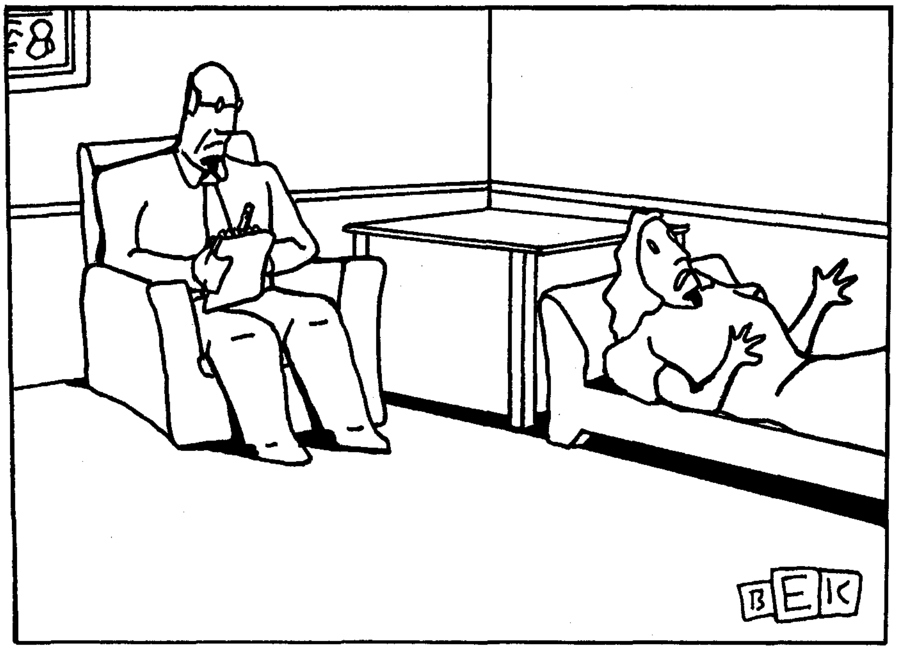

"Sometimes it's as if I didn't know the difference between what's real and what's trompe-l'oeil."

• •

rock-and-roll music do? What did we want? With my family, the break started in 1920, when Granddaddy moved away from Clear Springs to find land, and we ended up living right on the edge of town. The stores around the courthouse square were tantalizingly near. Who wouldn't rather go shopping than hoe peas? And the radio told us that we weren't quite so isolated: we were in Radioland! The highway called us, too. Our ancestors had been lured over the ocean to America by false advertising—here was the promised land, literally—but, once arrived, they had to clear stumps and learn to raise hogs instead of sheep. We inherited their gullibility. We wanted to go places, find out what was out there. My sisters and I didn't marry farmers; we were more interested in the travelling salesmen. By the time my brother—the youngest of the four, born too late—came of age, a family farm required more land and machinery than it once had in order to prosper. So again it was time to move on.

We didn't want to be slaves to nature. Maintaining the Garden of Eden was too much work—endless hoeing, fences to fix, hay to bale, and cows to milk, come rain or come shine. My mother, who knows more about wind and weather and soil and raising chickens than I ever will, approves of "progress," even though she finds much of it scary and empty. The old ways were just too hard, she says wearily. She and my father expected better lives for their children. They knew we'd leave.

But I keep looking back to see where I've been. I am angry that my father died before I could ask him all I wanted to know about the life of a dairy farmer, because I think he knew all about the earth and the seasons.

The winter light is heavy and stark. Dim skies, silhouettes of black trees, mud. The dampness deepens these brown-and-black tones of the landscape. Oscar and I cross the creek and head out through the cornfield. The corn has been harvested by a big machine that gobbled up the stalks, moiled the shucks and spit them out, then glommed the kernels off the cob and spun them off. I recall the way dried corn comes off the cob when you do it by hand. You mash two cobs together hard and loosen some of the kernels till they pop out like teeth. Then you can rub the cobs together and pop all the kernels out of their sockets. I also recall shelling corn for the chickens with a corn sheller; it had a crank handle and an iron maw with teeth. Now I can hear corn being crumbled and gnashed in the tower.

The cedar trees on the fencerow along our western border have grown thick and tall and have lost their youthful prickliness. We always had a young, scraggly cedar from one of the fencerows for our Christmas tree. Now these trees are full of bluish berries and cone-like cocoons made by some insect that shrouds itself with a dead cedar twig. The chicken tower has a star on top for Christmas. From up there, you would see the lay of this farm, reduced in its significance, a small piece of the earth. It is late afternoon, and the ominous winter light accents the trees. Then the harsh electric light of the chicken tower floods the area. It is never dark at night the way it used to be, when there were just stars and moon.

There's a loneliness about the home-place now. But the family straggles home each Christmas to renew itself, and the place comes to life. In the way of rural families, Mama doesn't invite us to come, but she expects us all to be there. And we always are.The family is small, only fifteen of us. Mama cooks a dinner for her four children, their three spouses, her five grandchildren, and two more spouses. She has turkey with cornbread dressing and giblet gravy, a ham, potato salad, dressed eggs, jello salad, cranberry relish, her special Sunset Salad, broccoli casserole with cheese sauce, yeast-raised rolls. And from her freezer she may offer creamed corn, green beans, shelly beans, and brown field peas—all grown in her garden. Then she loads the table with fruit salad, boiled custard, her special uncooked fruitcake, coconut cake, German chocolate cake, peanut bars, decorated refrigerator cookies. She makes all this food herself, because we don't really know how to do it and it is her joy to feed us amply. She makes enough for about thirty-six people. It seems always to be prepared for some imagined larger family.

This dinner defines the family and replenishes us for another year. We get there, regardless of what it costs us in money or trouble, or whatever difficulty with weather and flight delays. We're far-flung. We have not scattered simply to Paducah or Nashville or Louisville, places within reasonable reach. We didn't leave the farm for Pittsburgh or Hattiesburg or Racine. My sisters

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and I first headed to California, Florida, and New York—the meccas. One niece worked at Disney World; one sister works in special-effects computer graphics in Hollywood. The movies, Disney World, Manhattan. Those were the fishing lures that came over the airwaves and reeled us in. I stayed in the Northeast for many years, chasing literary dreams; my first job was writing for a fan magazine. Even my brother, who stayed closest to home, works for the quintessential American corporation, Coca-Cola.

We've been free to roam, because we always know where home is.

OSCAR and I turn back. As we approach the pond, a heron—a great blue one this time—takes off from the water, not far ahead of us. Its flight path cuts across the face of the chicken tower, which looms beyond the house and the bare winter trees. The dying pondweed is dissolving into the muddy murk of the pond. As I look into the reflections on the surface of the pond, I think about all the death on this soil: the oaks that Mama says were "barked up and skinned" by lightning; the hogs and cows and calves and chickens we've slaughtered for food; all the cats and dogs smashed on that road after it was paved; my grandparents; my father. Before my grandparents moved here, a farmer died of epilepsy, in the garden. I think about what a farmer knows up there on his tractor or walking behind his mules—the slow, enduring pace of regular toil and the habit of mind that goes with it, the habit of knowing what is lasting and of noting every nuance of soil and water and season. What my father and my ancestors knew has gone, and their language lingers like relics. Soon my memories will be loosened from any tangible connection to this land.

I don't know what will happen to this piece of land eventually. Urbanization has hardly begun here in the Purchase. Kentucky is an agricultural state, ranking fourth in the nation in the number of family farms. The tension between holding on to a way of life and letting in a new way of life—under the banners of Wal-Marts and chicken processors—is the central dynamic of this area. There are no malls, no cineplexes, no coffee bars here, and

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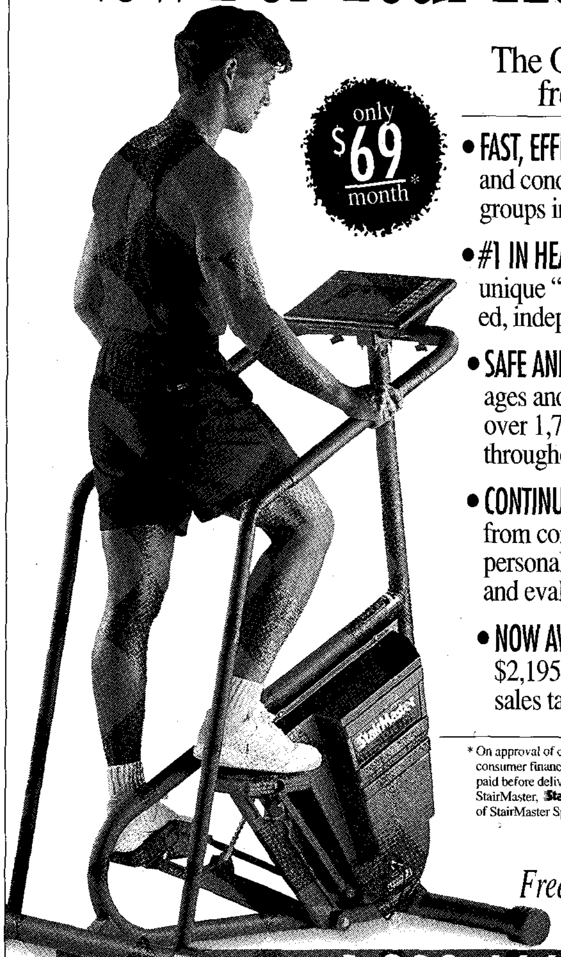

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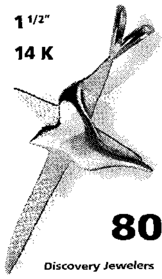

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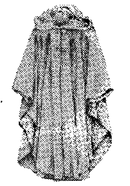

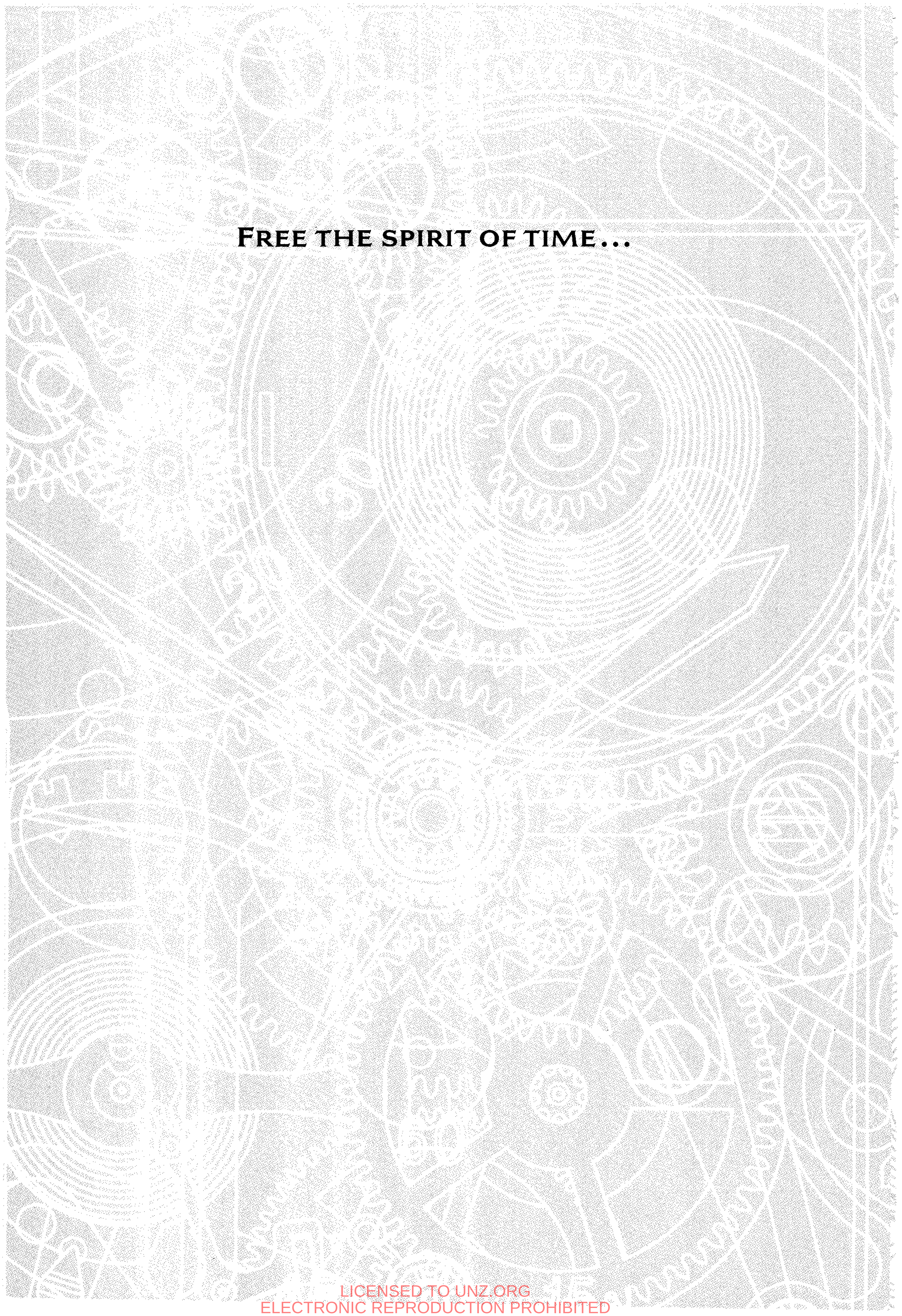

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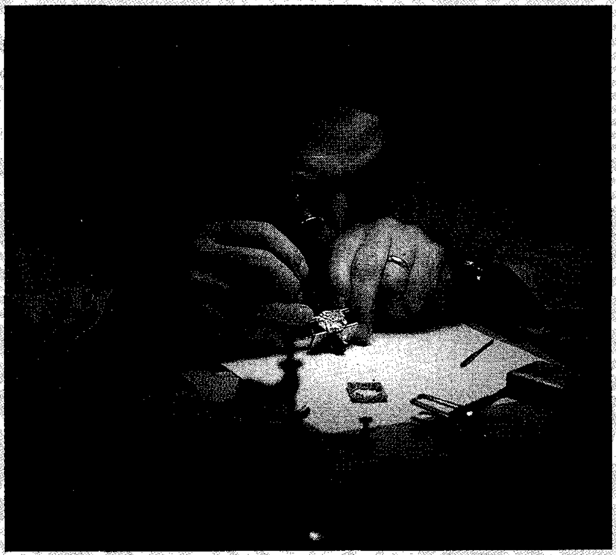

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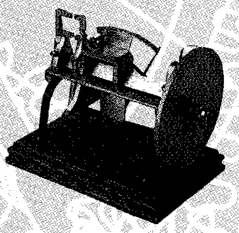

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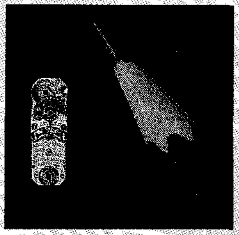
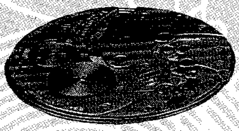
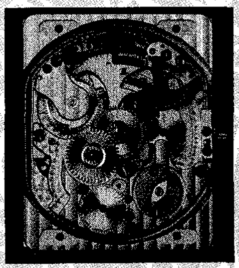


Caliber 101, the smallest ever mechanical watch movement. Since 1929, even Jaeger-LeCoultre has been unable to beat its own record.



No watchmaker has achieved a slimmer movement for pocket watches since LeCoultre created the 1.38 mm-thin Caliber 145 in 1903.



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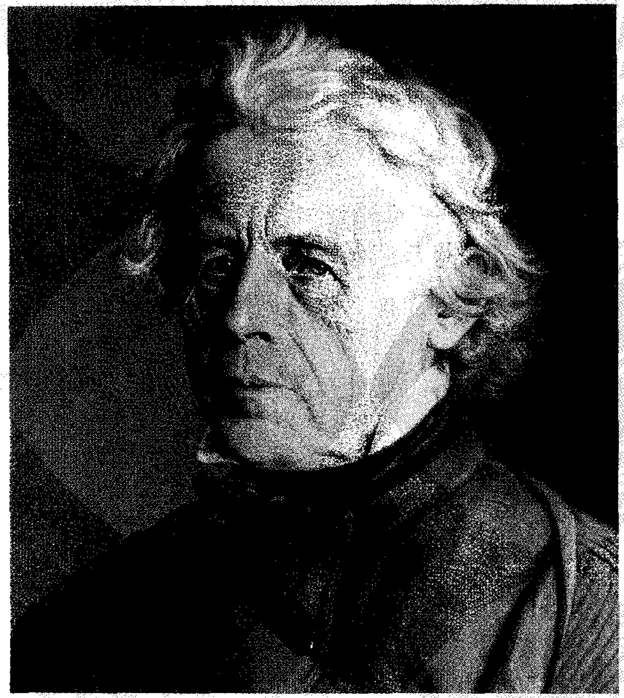

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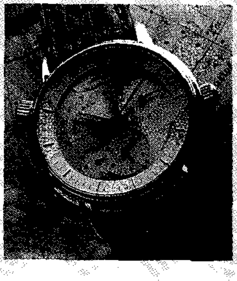

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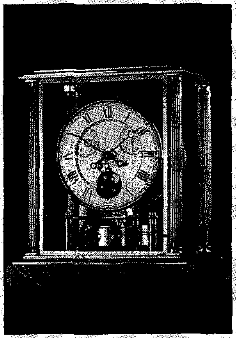

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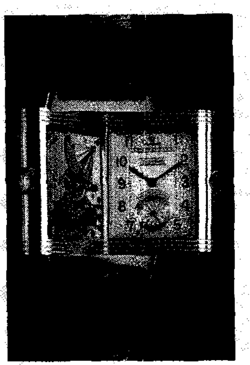
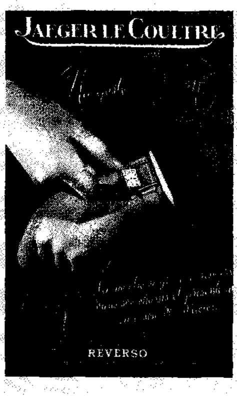


The tourbillon precision escapement. The most sophisticated mechanical watchmaking is worthy of the Reverso.



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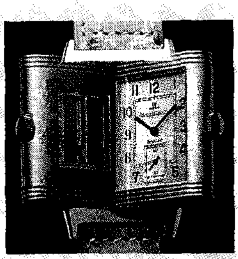
Reverso

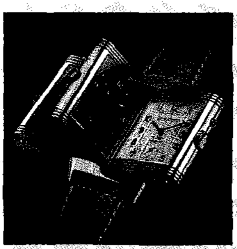
Advertising may have changed since the 1930s, but the Reverso remains true to its original concept.

Some of our best ideas are born in the most unlikely places. The legendary Reverso, for example, was conceived in India in 1930 for British colonial officers who wanted a watch that would survive the hard knocks of polo, and yet look smart at the club. The elegant solution was a watch that simply turned over to shield the fragile glass with its metal back, at the same time displaying the owner's engraved monogram or coat of arms. The Reverso has been in continuous production at Jaeger-LeCoultre since 1931, making it the oldest unchanged wristwatch still made today. But the proof of a good idea is that it opens possibilities for better ones. Still in its original Art Déco style, the Reverso today goes beyond basic timekeeping to complicated specialties which exemplify the top level of mechanical watchmaking techniques – the gravity-defying Tourbillon escapement; the sound of time captured in a minute-repeater; two watches and two time-zones in a single Reverso with back-to-back dials, and the epitome of 20th-century styling in the Art Déco model. In gold, in steel, and in five sizes, the Reverso also becomes the perfect jewel, encasing the world's smallest mechanical movement, the 1929 LeCoultre caliber 101.

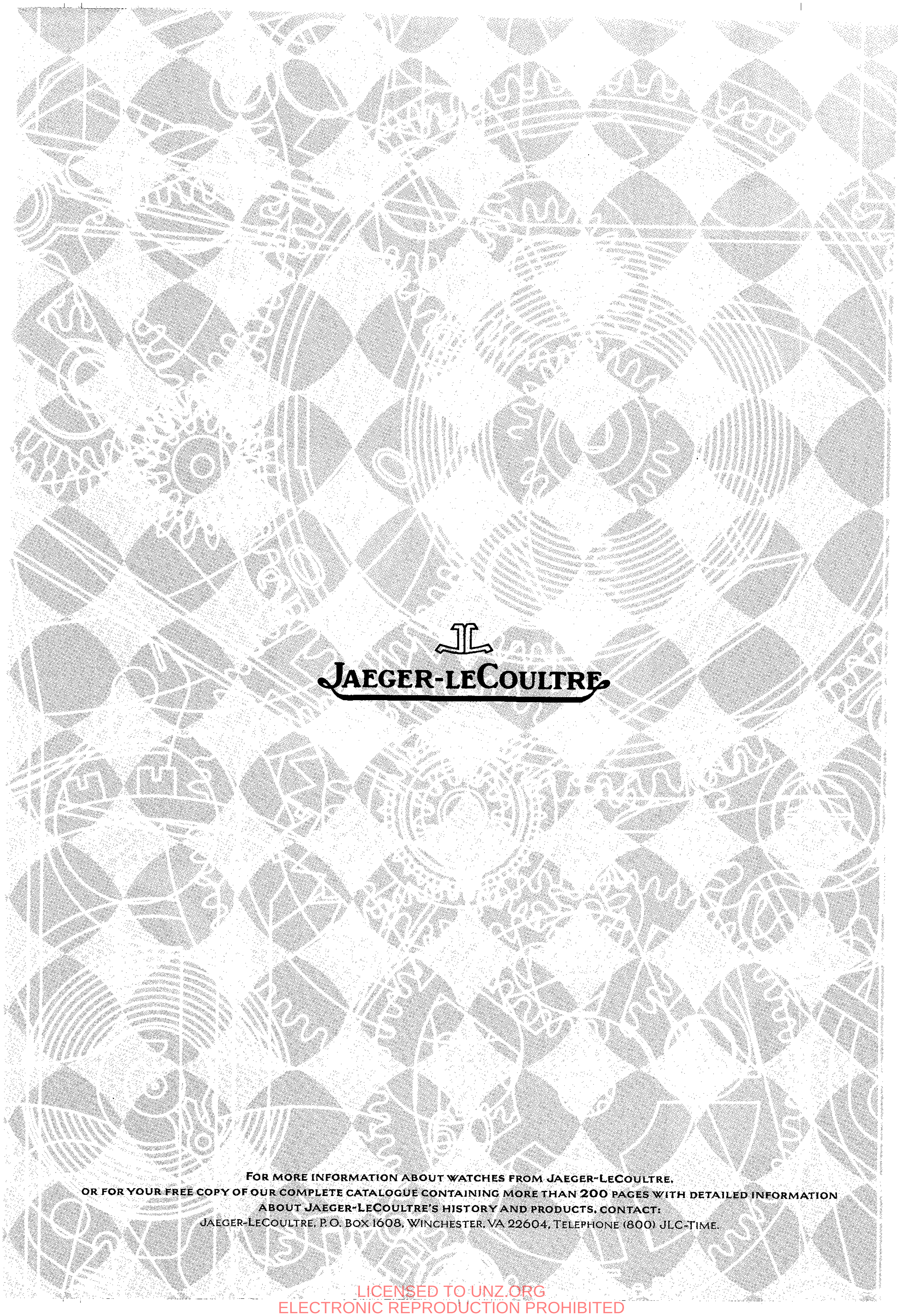


Part of the Reverso legend: a personal monogram in Art Déco style.

Today's classic Reverso, the Grande Taille model with small-second hand at 6 o'clock, remains true to the original 1930s concept.



Turn over to another time-zone and another watch. The Reverso Duo features back-to-back dials and contra-rotating hands.



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none are likely any time soon. But a Wal-Mart Supercenter is coming. The town is poised on the edge of the future.

As a family farm, this piece of land may be doomed. It's just too small, and the family has scattered. I've moved back to Kentucky, but not close enough to the farm to deal with a soybean crop. I wouldn't know how to make the ground say beans, the way Thoreau wanted it to, and would probably just prefer to read his musings on the subject. My nephew fantasizes a golf course; my brother dreams of building a minimart; someone has mentioned llamas. When land is spoken of these days, it's usually in an opportunistic tone. Someone sees a buck to be made. But the big bucks are usually made by someone else, not the people who know the land. I do not know what industrial or technological analogue of pondweed will take over this land. What is tame and what is wild seem to go through cycles of varying perspectives. I'm sort of wishing for a comeback of the blackberries. It's tempting to think of just holding on to the land while industries close in around. We could call the place a nature preserve. I think of those alligators and long-necked birds you see moving lazily in the foreground of a space-shuttle launch.

Our two houses face the chicken tower like cats staring at a stranger. My mother lives in my grandparents' old place, and the other house is unoccupied. It's the higgledy-piggledy house my parents kept adding onto periodically. I grew up in that house. The picture window is empty, and the shutters sag. The only known photograph of my maternal grandmother, whom I never knew, is in the attic, accidentally walled up behind some insulation. Mama won't look for it, because she says she had another one just like it that "crumbled to nothing" long ago. "There won't be no use trying to get it out from up there," she says. "There won't be nothing left."

Of course, I believe the photograph of my grandmother might be there. Maybe the special conditions in that nest of insulation protected it. Maybe it survived. Maybe there will still be a ghostly impression of her face. I've got to know. ♦

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AWAY FROM HOME

EASY TIME

A glimpse at the life of Jeffrey MacDonald, who is serving time in a model federal prison.

BY JANET MALCOLM

THE medium-security Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan, Oregon, is a place of immaculate cleanliness and bland tastefulness. Its low, white wood buildings are set in a landscape of lawns and paths, like those of a college campus, and its cells, furnished with blond wood beds and desks, are like rooms in college dormitories; the dining hall has tables for four, of the same Scandinavian-modern design, with matching chairs. The inmates, walking along the paths in their uniforms of white cotton T-shirts and khaki trousers, look like the attractive multicultural people in ads for Gap clothing. As you drive into the prison grounds, off a road in open Oregon farm country—the turnoff is marked by a sign made almost illegible by gladiolus growing in front of it—you feel none of the awe and dread that traditional prison architecture inspires. You feel more as you do when you drive into an airport and enter the orbit of its euphemistic, danger-denying semiotics. There are no guards at the entrance. A few yards down the driveway is an unmanned booth—like the booths that distribute tickets for airport parking—where you press a button, state your business into a receiver, and hear a voice telling you whether you may proceed.

On a fine morning last August, at exactly eight o'clock, I pressed the button and received permission from the voice to proceed to a certain parking lot and then to present myself at the prison's reception center. This was a one-room building with a cathedral ceiling, white walls, a glossily polished vinyl-tile floor, and, in the middle, a rounded reception station, where a tall, blond young guard, wearing a crisp white shirt, maroon tie, and gray trousers, stood holding a cordless phone with a long antenna. The guard gave me a form to fill out. On it I listed the reporter's paraphernalia—a notebook and pen, a tape recorder, and a camera—that I had received permission to bring into the prison from an official named Robert Palmquist. I had spoken with Palmquist on the telephone two weeks earlier to arrange a tour of the prison and a visit with an inmate named Jeffrey R. MacDonald.

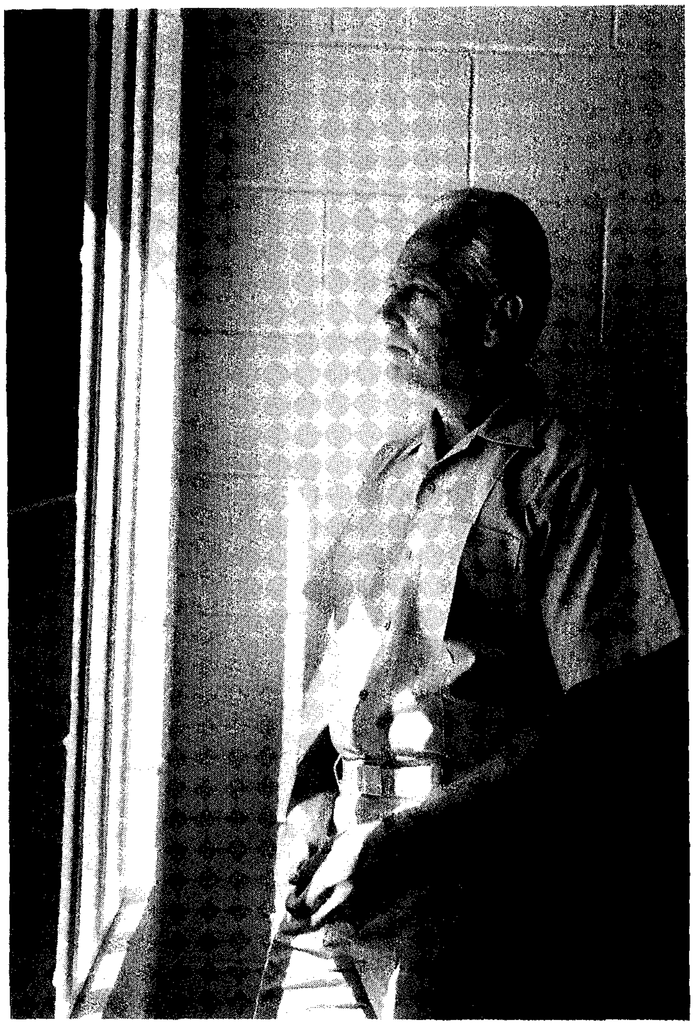
MacDonald is a famous prisoner, and earlier this year a large number of journalists—some as famous as, perhaps even more famous than, he (Connie Chung and Larry King, for example)—had come to the prison to interview him. Twenty-five years ago, in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where MacDonald was serving as a physician in a Green Beret unit, his pregnant wife and two small daughters were stabbed and bludgeoned to death, and nine years later he was brought to trial, found guilty of the murders, and sentenced to three consecutive life terms. But MacDonald has always claimed to be innocent, and the occasion for the recent flurry of interviews was the publication of a quietly convincing book, "Fatal Justice: Reinvestigating the MacDonald Murders," by Jerry Allen Potter and Fred Bost, who, in the course of combing through government files released through the Freedom of Information Act, had come to believe MacDonald's story: that four hippies on drugs murdered his family and left him for dead after knocking him unconscious. In the files the authors found exculpatory evidence of the hippies' presence in the MacDonald apartment—evidence that they assert the government prosecutors suppressed.

My idea in coming to see MacDonald, however, had been to write not about his case but about his life in prison. What was his day-to-day, moment-to-moment experience of the model prison where he had washed up after stays in less pretty places, including four years of solitary confinement in an institution on Terminal Island, off San Pedro, California? MacDonald—about whom I had once written, and with whom I had been sporadically corresponding over the years—

gamely agreed to lend himself to my anthropological project. The man himself is as blandly pleasant as the prison he is in. If he is innocent—and the evidence of his guilt grows increasingly elusive—he bears the ordeal of unjust imprisonment with remarkable fortitude and a kind of bizarre sunniness, like that which airline pilots maintain, no matter what the provocation of traffic, weather, or equipment failure may be. ("Well, folks, traffic control has just told us we are nine-hundredth in line for takeoff. We're real glad you chose Eastern.") He has gathered around him a band of loyal followers with whom he communicates from prison in something of the manner of a congressman in Washington communicating with his constituents back home: he sends out periodic bulletins—for a while, there was a *MacDonald Defense Update Newsletter*—that radiate relentless enthusiasm and optimism and are permeated with an only slightly strange aura of calm authority. Over the years, various volunteer workers have acted as liaison officers between MacDonald and the press. Previously, I dealt with a woman named Gail Boyce; now a woman named Lucia Bartoli has taken over the job and is performing it with even greater efficiency and zeal. When I called, in July, Bartoli deftly took over the practical details of my trip to Oregon: she booked a room for me at the Sheridan Country Inn, a local bed-and-breakfast; wrote out lengthy driving instructions from the Portland airport; advised me on restaurant and tourist attractions; and warned me about points of prison protocol, such as getting advance permission to bring in writing and recording tools.

Robert Palmquist collaborated with my project in an equally, if somewhat differently, helpful way. In the arbitrariness of his dealings with me, Palmquist took me to the heart of the matter of being a prisoner—to the condition of helplessness and powerlessness in which the prisoner lives out his term. He allowed me to feel briefly what prisoners must feel all the time. He brusquely denied my request to visit the prison on three successive days, and would allow only a single one-day visit, on a day of his choosing. When I asked if the visit could start as early as possible, he wearily agreed to meet me at 8 A.M. in the reception center. His intransigence had a bracing authenticity. It penetrated to deep levels of infantile fearfulness in me; throughout our talk, I felt as if I were cringing. When I arrived at the prison, I was greeted with the news that my eight-o'clock appointment had become a nine-o'clock appointment; no reason was given for the change.

At a quarter to nine, Palmquist appeared, and escorted me through the security barrier of the reception room; I had already sent my handbag and a black canvas bag holding my notebook, tape recorder, and camera through an airport-style X-ray machine, and now my hand was stamped with an invisible "X," which would show up under ultraviolet light and permit me to leave the prison. Palmquist was wearing a white shirt, a dark tie, and dark trousers. He is a man in his late thirties, with the wide, waistless torso that many American men develop after their first youth and carry with a kind of unselfconscious grace that makes men with waists seem somehow meagre and stiff in comparison. He has a mustache, and clear blue eyes that would meet mine with a mocking steadiness. He led me silently across a lawn to a big two-story building and into a large room on the ground floor filled with rows of bolted-down plastic seats, as in a hospital clinic. The room was where prisoners meet with their girlfriends, wives, children, and parents, during evening and weekend visiting hours. It was empty now except for two people: a guard, who was leaning against a wall, and an expectant MacDonald. Palmquist motioned for me and MacDonald to go to an adjacent small room furnished with a table and two chairs—one of the rooms where prisoners may speak in private with their lawyers or with journalists—and left us.



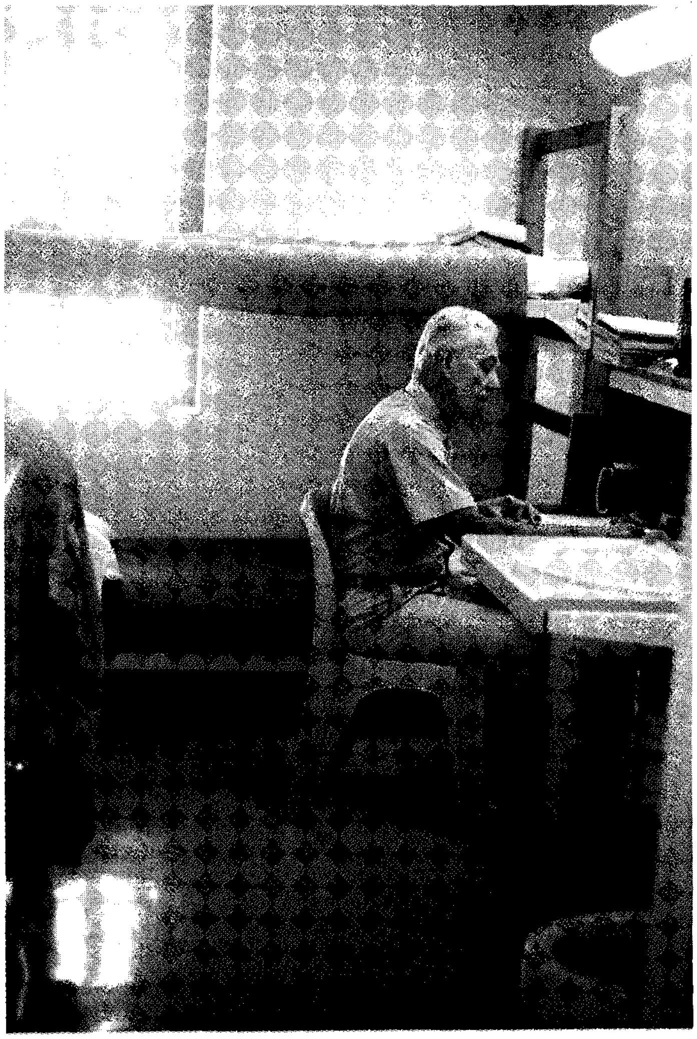
MacDonald: "This is not a bad place to be, except that I'm in prison and I shouldn't be in prison."

MACDONALD, at fifty-one, is lean and fit and handsome. His hair has turned a distinguished silver gray. He was wearing a crisply ironed short-sleeved beige cotton shirt and sharply creased beige trousers—an outfit that, he later told me, he reserves for visitors. With his characteristic obligingness, MacDonald refrained from speaking about his case and dutifully talked about prison life. He did not say anything remarkable. He told me that the Sheridan prison was the "crème de la crème" of the federal system; that it was clean and comfortable; that the food was good and plentiful; that there was central air-conditioning; that life there was called "easy time"; that there was nothing in the state-prison system to compare to it. He deplored what he called "the national drive to remove unnecessary frills" from federal pris-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANET MALCOLM

ons—a drive that had already removed the grant program through which inmates could work for college degrees and was now even threatening to remove weight-lifting equipment from the gyms, on the ground that convicts shouldn't be allowed to improve their ability to rob and kill people when they got out. He told the obligatory story of the senselessly penalized prisoner, this one a man whose tame bird was taken from him. There wasn't much he could say that wasn't generally known or that wouldn't get him into trouble. (The rooms for interviews with lawyers or journalists are assumed by all who enter them to be bugged.)

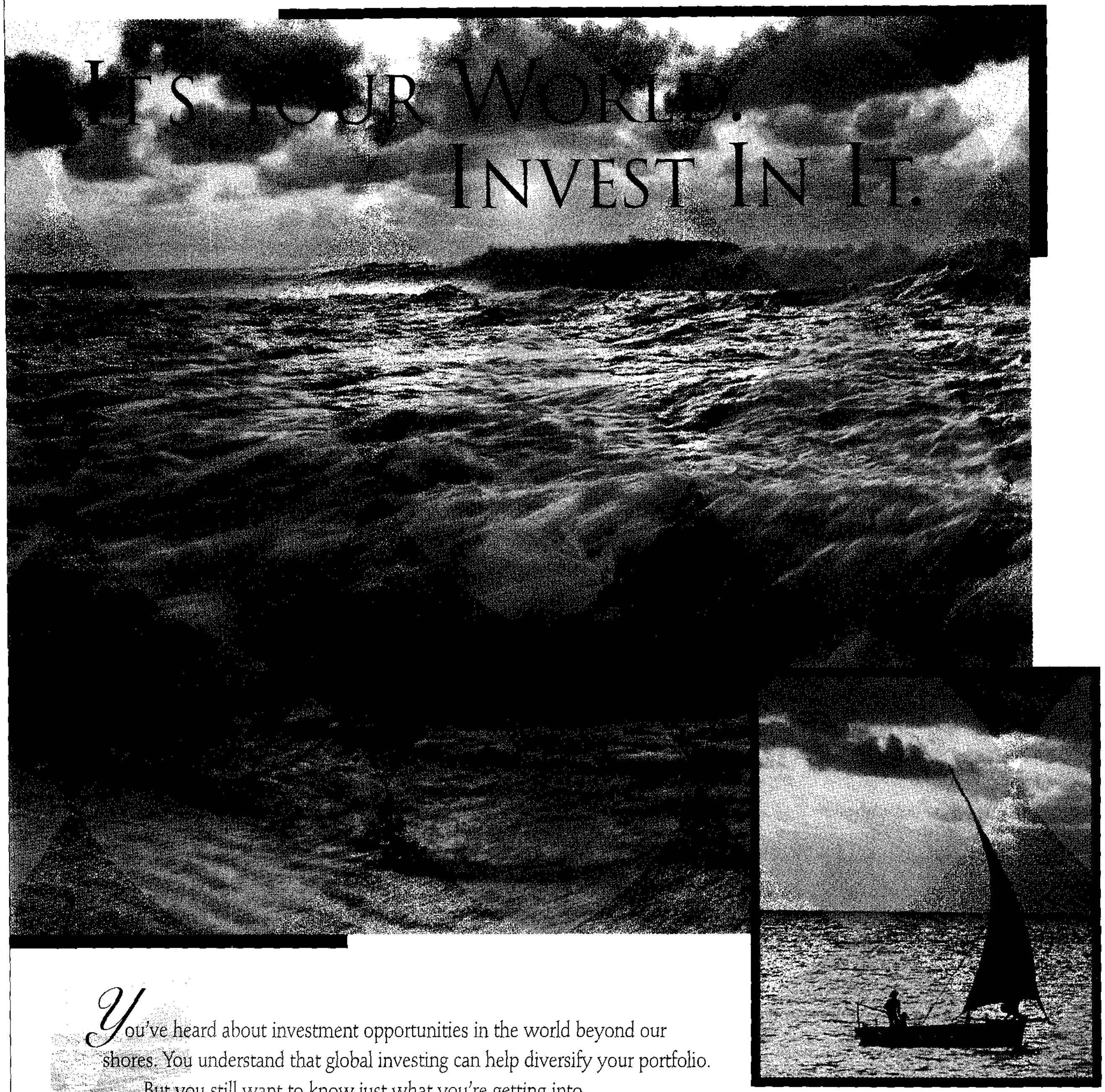
He stressed the difference between himself and the large majority of prisoners. He belongs to the small minority who maintain that they are innocent—the majority freely admit to, and are sometimes proud of, their crimes, MacDonald said—and who have the will and the resources to pursue their fight for legal redress. (MacDonald's resources ran out about six years ago, and his lawyer, Harvey Silverglate, of Boston, has been working for him for nothing.) Although MacDonald has received rebuff after rebuff from the courts, he continues to be optimistic about release. This optimism dovetails with a second prison occupation: the reading he does to keep himself abreast of developments in medicine, so that when he is free he will be in a position to resume medical practice. At the time of his conviction, MacDonald was the head of emergency medicine at St. Mary Medical Center in Long Beach, California. On his conviction, his license was stripped from him, and he has not been allowed to do any doctoring in prison, although he has more than once stepped in to save an inmate's life when emergency measures were called for. He is the only prisoner with an M.D., and he acts as a kind of medical guru to prisoners (and to an occasional guard) with health problems—their own or their families'. He told me that his counselling practice is very heavy—he says he cannot step out onto the prison grounds without being importuned by advice-seekers. He finds these encounters gratifying (in a letter to his lawyer's wife he wrote, "By reaching out and helping someone—easing *their* concerns, or fears, or taking away their pain, which is often related to a fear of the unknown, not only are they helped, but I am uplifted also") and useful to him in his studies: the ailments put before him for diagnosis or a second opinion provide him with a focus for his reading.



MacDonald in the cell he shares with another prisoner and where he works on his case, keeps up with medicine, and writes letters.

MacDonald's third prison occupation is a fitness program: he does yoga and meditation, and works out at the gym; he runs, and has definite health-food ideas, such as a belief in the efficacy of raw garlic. His day is a model of disciplined and productive activity, and it hinges on a peculiarity of the federal-prison system: there isn't enough work to go around. Federal prisoners serving time are also served by time: they have the leisure for study and introspection that most free people can only daydream about. Of the more than twelve hundred prisoners at Sheridan, MacDonald told me, three hundred and fifty have full-time jobs in a furniture factory on the premises; most of the rest have part-time jobs, and some of the work they do is make-work. MacDonald's own prison job is that of orderly: he cleans the four administrative offices in his cell unit; he washes windows, vacuums rugs, washes and waxes linoleum floors, and makes coffee for the administrators. He does this five days a week between seven and nine in the morning and is paid between eleven and sixteen dollars a month, depending on where the prison is in its budget. (Other prisoners get less; he told me with only a trace of irony that he has "seniority" and thus is eligible for higher pay. His attitude toward his prison work reminded me of the elegant offhandedness of dissidents in East European Communist countries who had been thrown out of their professions and given menial jobs.) He told me that he always requests orderly work, because he can get it done early in the day and be free to spend the rest of the morning and part of the afternoon in his cell, working on his case or his medical studies. After dinner, between six and nine, he exercises in the gym or plays softball or basketball. From nine to twelve, when all prisoners must be in their cell units, though not necessarily in their cells (there are four TV rooms in each unit), he elects to stay in his cell writing letters; he has many correspondents and is a prolix writer. At midnight, all prisoners must be in their cells, which are locked until six the next morning.

MacDonald spoke with detached knowledgeability about prison society. "There are four issues in prison that cause at least ninety or ninety-five per cent of the stabbings and assaults and murders," he said. "Issue No. 1, far and away, is ho-



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mosexuality: not the act itself but the problems attendant on it—the jealousy, the recriminations, the threats, someone moving out and taking another lover, someone saying 'You can't have that one,' the homosexuality by force. It's head and shoulders No. 1. No. 2 is gangs; No. 3 is drugs; and No. 4 is gambling debts." He himself, he told me, has never run afoul of his fellow-prisoners. He spoke with modest pride of the forceful body language ("It has to do with the way you carry yourself") with which he has successfully guarded his straightness for the last thirteen years. "In the Army, you could always spot a guy who'd been in Vietnam. He had what we called the thousand-yard stare. There was a different look coming out of him—the same look that comes out of a guy who isn't going to put up with bullshit in prison. I've never had a problem in prison in that way."

At around eleven, when our talk had begun to peter out a bit and Palmquist had not reappeared to take me on my tour of the prison, MacDonald good-naturedly, if somewhat self-consciously, posed for photographs near a window in an adjacent room. When, finally, Palmquist arrived, the lunch hour had begun, and I asked him if I could go to the mess hall and sample the prison food. "No," he said, looking at me with his mocking gaze. I looked back at him with interest.

"You will not allow me to taste the prison food?" I said.

"That's right," he said.

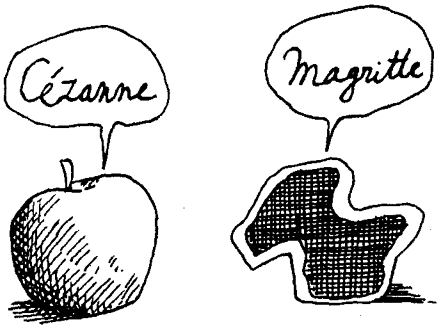
I followed him silently up a flight of stairs to his office, where he instructed me to leave my handbag and black canvas bag for the duration of the prison tour. I asked if I could take my notebook and pen. He said yes. He watched me take them out of the canvas bag and then asked if I wanted to take the camera as well. I considered and said no. The neck strap of my camera was broken, and the prospect of juggling notebook, pen, and camera seemed too daunting; and I had my roll of pictures of MacDonald. We walked out of the building, crossed another lawn, and looked into several low buildings along a walkway: the laundry and supply building, where the white T-shirts and khaki trousers were issued; the factory, where the Scandinavian-modern furniture is fabricated; the law library; the gym. Then Palmquist, MacDonald, and I walked over to MacDonald's cell unit, one of four in the prison. (MacDonald had evaporated while I was in Palmquist's office and had rejoined us at the laundry. He later told me that before leaving the visitors' hall he had had to submit to a routine strip search; this involved taking off all his clothes and bending over and spreading the cheeks of his buttocks.) We entered a light-filled triangular space, two stories high, with two tiers of blond wood doors—the doors to the cells—running along the triangle's sides. In the open area, a kind of encampment of bunk beds had sprung up—beds neatly made with gray wool blankets and white sheets and pillowcases, on some of which men were stretched out, resting or reading. MacDonald led us to one of thirty-one doors on the ground-floor tier. As I looked into the cell and back at the landscape of bunk beds in the open, I immediately regretted my decision to leave my camera behind. "Could I go back and get my camera?" I asked Palmquist.

"No," he said.

"It would take just a moment."

"No."

The bunk beds in the open were the prison's overflow. The institution was designed to accommodate five hundred inmates; it now held twelve hundred and fifty. The cells had been designed for one prisoner and now held two. But even this doubling up had proved insufficient. New prisoners were now housed in the open area originally intended to be a recreational space: once, there had been card tables and reading chairs. The overcrowding is a result of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1987, which virtually eliminated parole for federal prisoners. At the door of MacDonald's cell, Palmquist broke his habitual silence to speak about the implications of this law. "There is swift and sure punishment now," he said. "No one gets short sentences anymore. The people here are going to be here for a long time." I glanced over at MacDonald, who was listening impassively. Palmquist added, "Managing a human warehouse is not easy when there is continuous pressure to put more and more people behind bars."



"Yes, things would be easier if there were fewer prisoners," I said sympathetically.

"I didn't say that," Palmquist said.

"You *don't* think things would be easier?" I said, wondering what this argument was about and why I was in it.

"We can handle up to thirteen hundred people."

"And more than thirteen hundred people?"

"That will never happen."

"I see."

Palmquist's mocking look returned. "You've been here four hours now," he said. "Do you feel threatened and oppressed and afraid for your life?"

"Far from it."

Palmquist stood aside to let MacDonald and me enter the cell, a room twelve feet by eight, with white walls, a barred window, a gray linoleum floor, a bunk bed, two metal cabinets, a desk, a chair, a sink, and a toilet; without the sink and the toilet, it would look like a preternaturally neat room in a college dorm. MacDonald's roommate, Jim, who had been napping on the top bunk, descended, affably shook hands, and tactfully withdrew to a TV room. MacDonald said that he liked Jim very much, and did not complain about the close quarters. I sat on MacDonald's bunk, which seemed cruelly hard until MacDonald told me that he had put a bedboard under the mattress. He opened his cabinet to show me shelves crammed with vitamins, dried soups, nonfat powdered milk, honey, packages of tortillas, and boxes of garlic, along with towels, underwear, and clothes. The desk, which MacDonald and his roommate putatively share but which seemed to be entirely MacDonald's, held an orderly array of medical and legal textbooks, file folders, correspondence, and a small display of art reproductions and photographs, including a detail of a Burne-Jones sleeping woman and a color photograph of MacDonald and an attractive woman in a blue silk dress standing in a stylized pose, with the woman lightly placing her hand on the man's sternum in a gesture of refined proprietorship. MacDonald told me that the woman was Lucia Bartoli. He said that he and Bartoli had met on an airplane in 1979, had dined together once, and had

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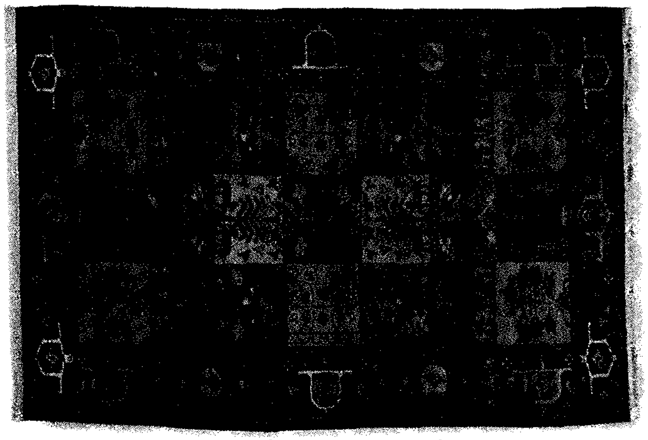
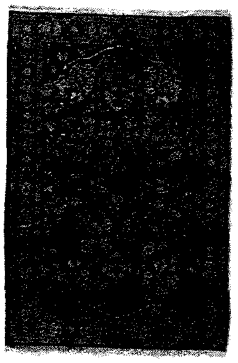


{*Village Garden*}



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met again only after his conviction, and after she had initiated a correspondence. Now Bartoli, who lives in Laguna Hills, California, comes to Sheridan every six or eight weeks and stays for four days, seeing MacDonald during the evening and weekend visiting hours in the visitors' hall.

MacDonald showed me two pictures he had hung on walls not visible from the outside—one of a pair of wolves and the other of a fox—which had been painted and given to him by an inmate named Running White Wolf, the man whose tame bird had been taken away. He said prison regulations forbade art on the walls of cells. When I asked the reason for this iconoclasm, Palmquist said from the doorway, "We don't need a bunch of nude pictures hanging up on the walls. It's not conducive to the atmosphere we want here."

The visit to MacDonald's cell was the last stop on the tour. (Later, I realized how abbreviated it had been: I had not seen, among other places, the chapel, which had been damaged during a prison riot in 1993, or the "detention and segregation" cells, where inmates are put for infractions of rules.) Palmquist escorted me back to his office to reclaim my handbag and the black canvas bag. On an impulse, I asked if he wouldn't relent and allow me to go back to the cell unit and take a few pictures of MacDonald's cell and of the open area.

"No," he said.

"The people at my magazine will probably want a picture of the cell," I said.

He said nothing.

"Will you let them send someone else out here to take pictures?"

"Yes, they can do that."

"But doesn't it make more sense for me to take the pictures now than for someone to have to make the trip to Oregon again?"

Palmquist paused. Then he said in a tight voice, "I asked you if you wanted to bring your camera, and you said no."

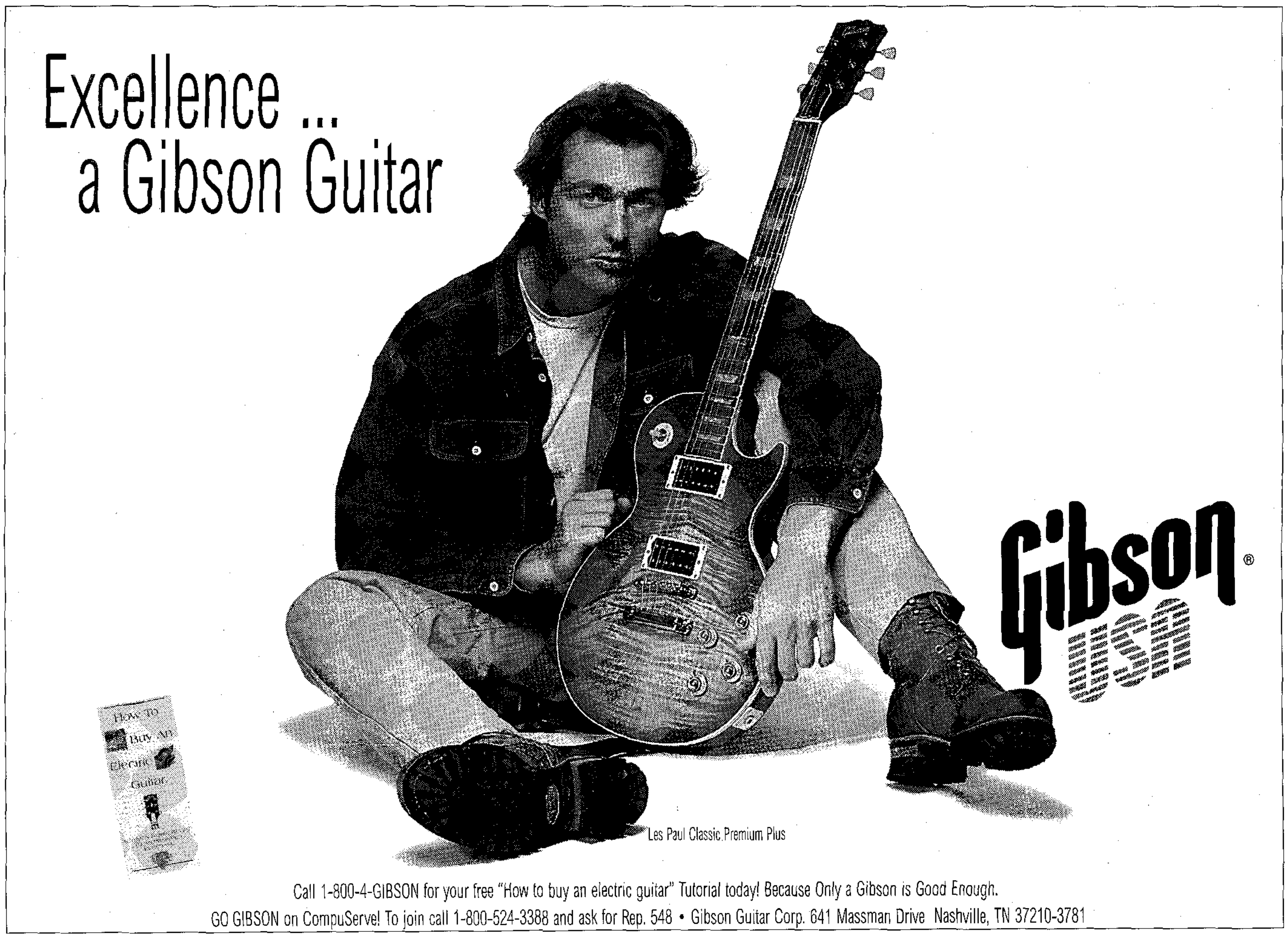
"It was a mistake. I made a mistake. People make mistakes," I said.

He said nothing.

I looked at him hard. "I'll ask you one more time: will you let me take the pictures?"

Like a jammed lock that suddenly, inexplicably gives way, Palmquist suddenly, inexplicably relented. "All right," he said. "I don't need to be abused in the press. Let's go."

THAT evening, MacDonald and I met again in the journalist/lawyer room and talked about Palmquist. Our conversation had taken on a new animation: we were like kids talking about teachers—about a particular, excitingly difficult teacher. The allure of authority remains with us all our lives; our early impressions and misimpressions of obduracy and capriciousness are deeply stamped and fused forever with feelings of love and longing. "People think he's a warden," MacDonald said of our transferential object of desire. "But he's way below a warden. His title is executive assistant to the warden, and he's basically like a secretary to the warden. If the blacks want more black hair-care products in the commissary and they're threatening something—like burning down the chapel—he becomes the mediator, and eventually calls the warden. But he's not an associate warden. Wardens are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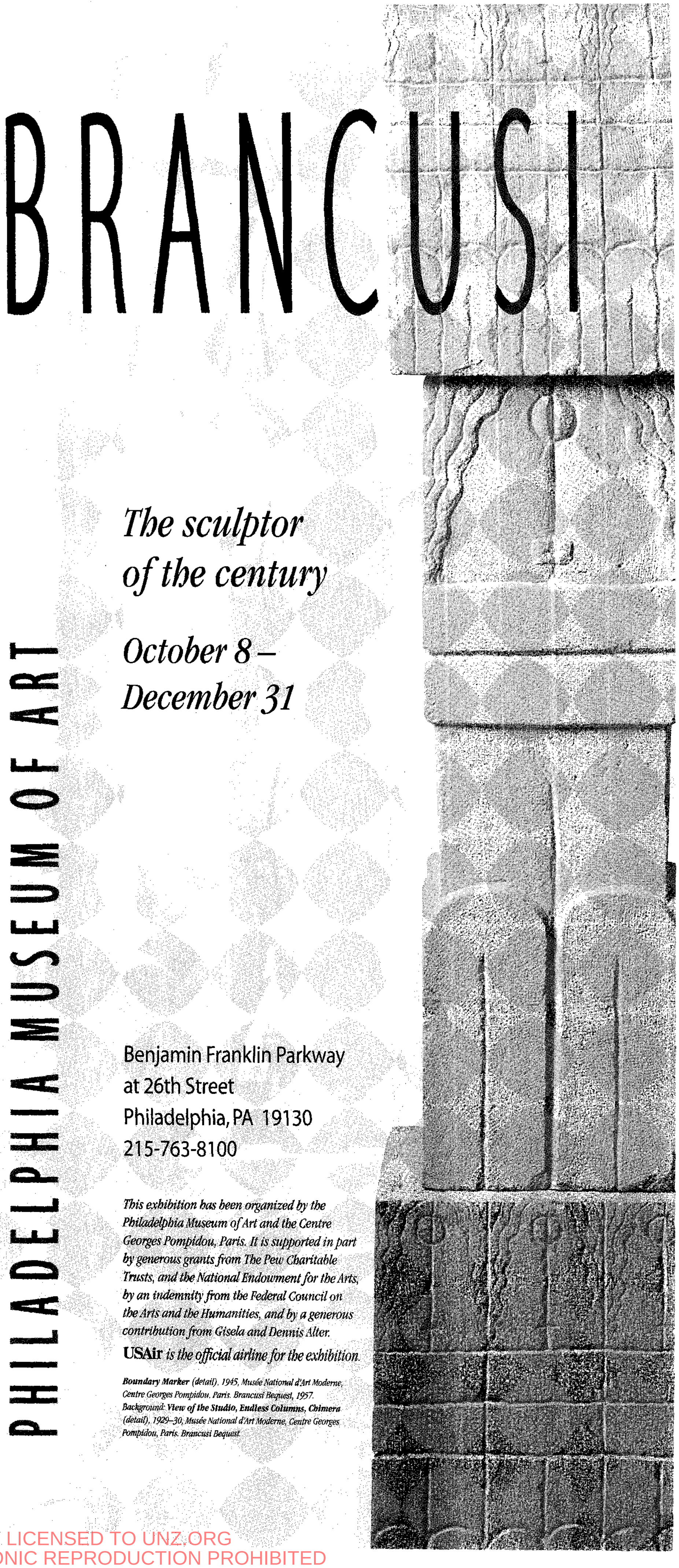
considerably above him in the food chain."

I recalled certain moments of my encounter with Palmquist. Returning with him to his office for the first time, I had noticed what seemed to be an unusually large number of prisoners walking purposefully along the paths and walkways. I asked if something was going on, and Palmquist replied that this was a period called "movement," when prisoners went from one activity to another. I said, "Sort of like students going from one class to another?" and he said, as if he liked the analogy, "That's right." Encouraged by his agreement, I allowed myself a pious speculation about how prison officers over time must gain a sense of their charges' humanity and individuality. Palmquist looked at me with exasperation. "Everyone has to be treated the same," he said. "That's what our job is. No one is treated any different from anyone else."

Later, after Palmquist's remarkable volte-face over the camera, when we were retracing our steps back to MacDonald's cell block, he obliquely returned to the theme of equality. I asked him, "*Have* you been abused in the press?" and he replied that no, he hadn't been. Then he added, in an undertone, "The other journalists came, did their interviews, and left." Meaning (I think) that my project—to interview MacDonald *and* to tour the prison—was irregular and eccentric. The corollary to "Everyone is treated the same" is "Everyone does the same." In a human warehouse—particularly in a crowded one—the boxes must be regulation size and shape. Visitors, like inmates, must stay in line, must obey written and unwritten laws of conformity. No one must ask for special treatment.

My remark to Palmquist about making a mistake had brought into relief another difference between life in prison and life on the outside. In life on the outside, our small, irritating mistakes are tolerated; indeed, we would find existence unbearable if they weren't. We are forever saying "I'm sorry" to one another, perpetually negotiating the unspoken contract whereby allowable transgression—transgression that has no consequences—is defined. In prison, there is no such contract, there is no margin for error, no leeway, no quarter given. MacDonald told me that if, under the convict's code, you don't immediately pay a gambling debt punishment immediately follows—you are stabbed or sodomized—and if you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Boundary Marker *(detail), 1945, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Brancusi Bequest, 1957.*
Background: ***View of the Studio, Endless Columns, Chimera*** *(detail), 1929–30, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Brancusi Bequest.*

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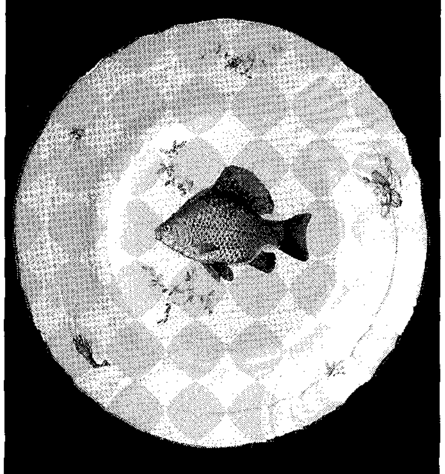

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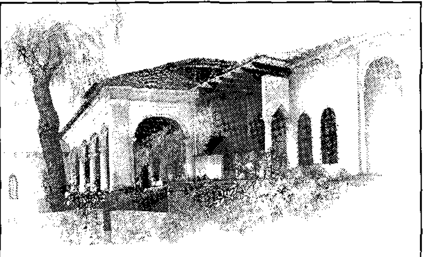

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break a prison rule (get caught drinking prison-made wine, say) you are put in the hole. The irredeemably serious mistakes that convicts have made, the antisocial acts that brought them to their predicament, form the dire background for the petty dramas played out in the foreground. My petty drama with Palmquist about the camera was a kind of front-of-the-curtain enactment of what goes on between jailers and jailed and between jailed and jailed in the play proper. That I did not have to accept the unpleasant consequences of my irritating mistake, that I got my second chance, was purely the result of the power I have as a journalist in an open society. "I don't need to be abused in the press." Prison officials deal with journalists very carefully. They know we hold the better cards. Palmquist never overstepped, he was always extremely polite, and that made his hostility all the more potent; it gleamed over our encounter like moonlight.

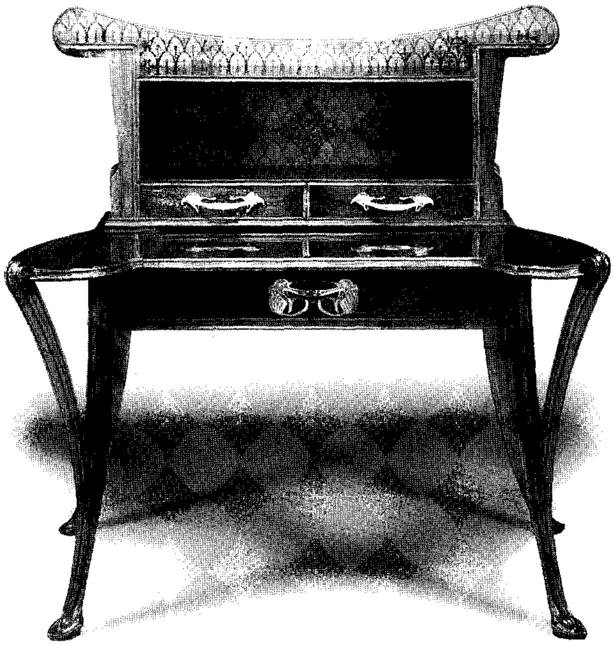
IN the large hall outside the journalist/lawyer room, the rows of plastic seats were now filled with prisoners and their evening visitors. Earlier, I had sat with some of the visitors in the reception room, waiting my turn to be called—visitors were let in slowly, in groups of ten or so—and sharing in the general sense of helpless irritation. A tall, haggard woman with an unlit cigarette in her hand went around the reception room asking if anyone had a match; a five- or six-year-old girl sat alone and rhythmically repeated a single unintelligible word. A mother told another small child to mind. A young woman wearing a very pretty long dress examined her face in a compact mirror. An elderly couple sat side by side not speaking. When I finally entered the visitors' hall, MacDonald had been waiting half an hour for me. He shrugged and said this was the way it was. In the journalist/lawyer room, he broke off pieces of a peanut-butter cookie and sipped a diet soda I had bought him from one of several vending machines in an alcove off the large hall. Only visitors may approach the machines and use coins they have been allowed to bring into the prison in clear plastic bags. (Other items allowed in the bags are makeup, two diapers, two unopened jars of baby food, two half-full clear plastic baby bottles, tampons, and heart and epilepsy medicine.) I asked MacDonald if the cookie was going to be his dinner, and he said no. He described the dinner he would prepare for himself back at the cell unit after the visit. He would make a burrito—a tortilla filled with canned chicken, cheese, chopped onions, and a tomato—and he would cook it in one of two microwave ovens in his unit. He was pleased about the tomato; he had acquired it from a cook in the prison kitchen in exchange for a favor. MacDonald watches his diet carefully; he had chosen the protein-filled cookie and the sugarless soda as lesser evils among the unwholesome snacks in the vending machines. He told me of efforts he had made—along with five other "activists"—to add health foods to the list of items sold in the commissary, and after my visit he sent me a recent commissary list annotated to show items "we 'fought' for and 'won' in the past twelve months after long struggle." Among them were brown rice, rolled oats, granola, honey, herb teas, garlic parsley pasta, kosher vegetarian stew, yogurt trail mix, and fat-free pretzels. He also sent his recipe for Prison Yogurt, and a copy of a week's menus in the mess hall, which included "fresh brewed coffee," "chilled fresh milk," "creamy cole slaw," "soup du jour," "perfection salad," and "noodles Jefferson"—an obvious improvement on the "stale bread d'If" and "country-fried water" of old.

"This is not a bad place to be," MacDonald said, "except that I'm in prison and I shouldn't be in prison. That's the rage. I try not to think about it." For the first time in our talk—as MacDonald thought about it—the airline pilot's cheeriness faltered and a look of desolation passed over his face. Then he smiled. As he did so, I thought of the goofy little circles with smiling faces that MacDonald likes to punctuate his letters with. He went on, "I can't imagine a prison better than this. Except, perhaps, a prison where they let you have a typewriter or a word processor. In the state prisons, they allow them. But, as far as creature comfort goes, there's no problem here. We're not brutalized. There are no daily stabbings. The food is very edible and reasonably nutritious. Sometimes the preparation is a little lax. But, come on, it's a prison and the inmates prepare it. There is a reasonable change of meals. What bothers the inmate here, of course—as in every prison—is the loss of his freedom. That's No. 1. No. 2 is the control they have over you in little things. They have the control, and they keep telling you they have the control. The lawns look beautiful, don't they? But we can't walk on them. We can only walk on the sidewalks. We never walk on the grass."

I couldn't resist telling MacDonald that at Cambridge University, which I had recently visited, the students couldn't walk on the grass, either; only faculty members were allowed on it. "Is that so?" MacDonald said, with genuine interest. He returned to the theme of the prison's relative benignity. "My friend Dennis was bitching about something the other day—prisoners are notorious whiners—and I said, 'Dennis, did you ever see a picture of a Cambodian death camp with the piles of skulls?' He said yes. I said, 'Eat your soup and shut up.' "

I asked MacDonald if he had any income besides the prison salary, and he told me that he receives three hundred dollars a month—a third of the rent from his late mother's house, which he owns in common with a brother and a sister. "When I lost my own home," he said of a condominium apartment he'd had near Long Beach, "it was a traumatic thing. I held on to it for a long time and finally had to sell it, in 1987. It was weird. Friends of mine—doctors living in half-million-dollar homes—said, 'Jeff, it's just material. You can get it again when you're back at work.' And I knew that, intellectually. But my home was important to me. It was a place of solace. I kept it very beautiful. Coming home from work, it was important that it be quiet and that things be in order, and sort of elegant. It was never sloppy, and I tried not to have a lot of cheap trinkets. It was always clean and quiet, a little spare, almost. It was my refuge."

A guard entered the room and said that visiting hours were over. MacDonald and I shook hands. Our talk had been friendly and easy; we parted a little reluctantly, as people do who have enjoyed each other's company. "Look beneath the veneer," he said—something he had said several times earlier, possibly speaking about himself as well as about the prison, and expressing a kind of Platonism that tells us not to trust our senses, that the truth of things is always hidden behind a false front. Journalists, like anthropologists, and sociologists, and psychoanalysts, prefer to believe that the front is authentic and the truth of things is written on it—sometimes in a very pale hand, but there to see for those who care to look. ♦



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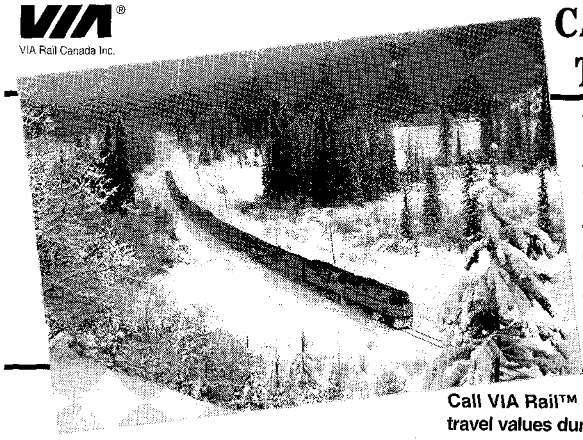

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THE WEEKEND HOUSE

MARTHA'S RETREAT

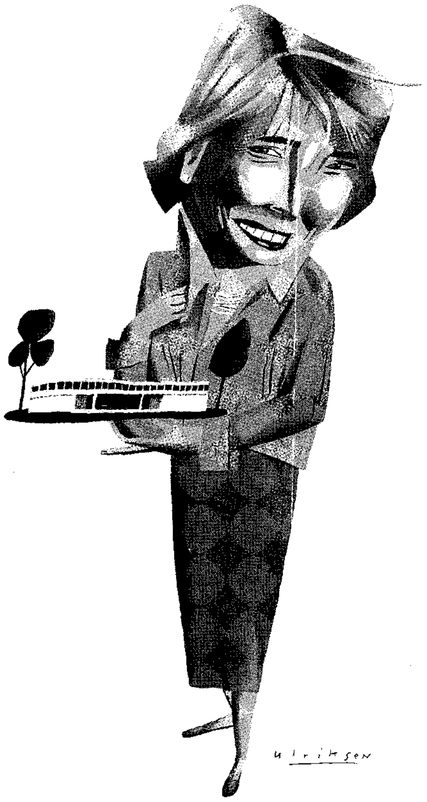
In 1962, the modernist Gordon Bunshaft built a suitably austere concrete house in East Hampton. Now it belongs to—Martha Stewart?

BY BRENDAN GILL

WHEN it was reported in the press a few months ago that Martha Stewart had bought a house in East Hampton designed by the celebrated architect Gordon Bunshaft (1909-90), people were quick to detect in this event certain incongruities. Was there ever a more unlikely pair than Stewart and Bunshaft—she the advocate, in her best-selling books, her TV appearances, and her magazine *Martha Stewart Living*, of a warmhearted, cozy domesticity, and he the advocate of an austere corporate architecture, entirely impersonal in character? Moreover, Stewart already owned a summer place in East Hampton—a capacious Victorian cottage on Lily Pond Lane, which, at considerable expense over the past several years, she had coaxed into an ever more plausible representation of its period, with long, shady porches, claw-footed bathtubs, and an old-fashioned rose garden. Why would she wish to acquire Bunshaft's severely modernist retreat, whose façade an architecture critic once described as resembling the death-row wing of an especially desolate penitentiary?

Still another incongruity: Stewart loves to entertain, and a host of relatives and friends are in and out of her house all summer long, while Bunshaft and his wife, Nina, were content to remain in isolation on Georgica Pond, surrounded by works of art that appear to have served as silent, never-failing friends. (After some years, Bunshaft did add a tiny guesthouse to the property, but seemingly as much in order to provide extra wall space for paintings as to shelter the occasional visitor.) Finally, to put the matter in crude financial terms, why would Stewart be willing to pay something over three million dollars for a bleak little one-story three-room house that stands in direct contradiction to her ebullient cooking, gardening, home-for-Thanksgiving life style?

In fact the incongruities people commented on at the time of the sale were less significant than they appeared to be. In the course of talking with Stewart over coffee at her house on Lily Pond Lane and, later, during a visit with her to the Bunshaft house (once it was stripped of its art works and furnishings, its naked rectangularity had become its chief feature), I concluded that the party-loving Stewart and the party-hating Bunshaft had several attributes in common, not least among them a single-minded seriousness about their careers.



Stewart and the Bunshaft house: the moment she heard of its existence, she wanted it.

I had been an acquaintance of Bunshaft's, if not actually a friend, and to call him serious is only to scratch the surface of the dour earnestness with which he wrestled with the nature of the world in general and the profession of architecture in particular. Stewart and I were meeting

MARK ULRIKSEN

in East Hampton for the first time, and if her seriousness startled me it was because my impression of her had been formed through friends who have become her disciples and have attempted to impose on their helter-skelter households the apparently carefree grace and charm that Stewart has so conspicuously succeeded in imposing on her own. Although these efforts often meet with failure, the disciples never give up trying. On the contrary: the more ambitious the goal they may fall short of reaching ("Russian Buffet for Twenty-four," "Christmas Open House for Fifty"), the stronger grows their faith in her.

Perhaps what Stewart's disciples find hardest to emulate is the smiling ease and high spirits that Stewart brings to her innumerable feats of hospitality and home decoration. The Martha Stewart I was speaking with was indeed smiling and seemed very much at ease. She is an attractive woman in her early fifties, who looks much younger than her years. Her brown eyes have an exceptionally direct gaze. My midmorning coffee and homemade cookies bore witness to her hospitality, and all around us was evidence of her decorating ingenuities. (These were also in some instances eccentricities, such as some wall ornaments consisting of enormous stuffed dead fish—in my opinion, not looking their best.) But it wasn't until we touched on the unlikelihood of her having wished to buy the Bunshaft house that a hint of executive steel emerged through the scrim of our conventional small talk. She was every bit as sure that her decision to buy the house had been a correct one as Bunshaft himself must have been in deciding how he would design it. (One of his partners at the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill has said of him, "Gordon never doubted that his was the right solution to a problem.") I recalled then what an admiring friend of Stewart had once said of her: "Martha is as focussed as a bullet in flight."

I HAD driven out to East Hampton on a sunny, breezy day in late summer, which is to say a typically perfect Martha Stewart day, and, since I was early for my appointment with her, I took the opportunity to walk though the village streets and lanes leading in the direction of the nearby Atlantic. I have been visiting East Hampton and its environs for well over fifty years, and it has always struck me as being an incomparably pretty village, echoing New England in its architecture rather than the early Dutch communities to the west. (The first settlers here were farmers who had sailed across Long Island Sound from Connecticut and brought Yankeedom with them.) In my youth, the impression of a rural community that had evolved slowly and unself-consciously into a summer resort for artists and "comfortably fixed" upper-middle-class New Yorkers was still very strong: the big brown-shingled houses slumbered on their none too carefully groomed lawns, behind hedges that might go unclipped all summer. There was sand underfoot and salt in the air, and, if they contained a certain fugitive glint of gold, the sand was still sand, the salt still salt.

East Hampton has changed, of course, and whether the change has been for the better or for the worse is, as in all such matters, a question of taste. It is certainly true that the town is prettier than ever, if in an immaculate, Maxfield-Parrish-storybook fashion, thanks to the recurrent waves of new money which have been pouring into the community over the past few decades. New money is highly competitive, and on Ocean Avenue, Lee Avenue, and Lily Pond Lane the rival houses—freshly painted, their surrounding hedges neatly groomed—sit gleaming in the sun. These dandified summer places serve as examples, at once authentic and inauthentic, of the thousands of houses from coast to coast that have been transformed—it is not too much to say that they have been born again—in devout obeisance to the Stewart Way. The look of them, solid and yet determinedly winsome, provides a necessary reassurance to their owners, projecting a picture of a kind of happy family life that has probably never existed.

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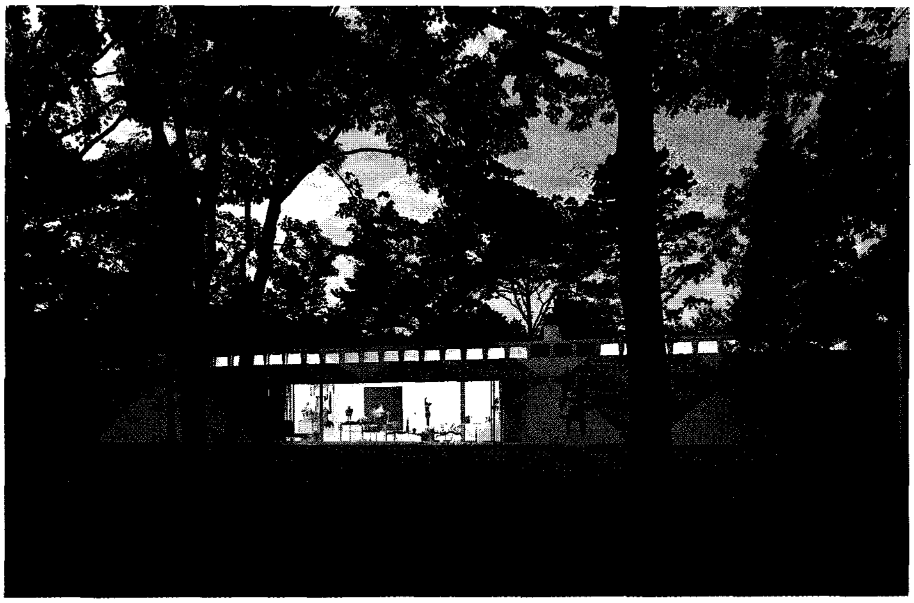

The Bunshaft house in the sixties—an intensely urban structure, requiring nature to buckle under to man.

EZRA STOLLER/ESTO

AMONG the friends I used to look forward to visiting in East Hampton were Edward and Mary Mathews. Gifted, irascible Eddie, an architect who (unlike many contemporary architects) could draw like an angel, was the administrative partner at Skidmore in charge of carrying out some of Bunshaft's most elegant projects, including the Marine Midland Bank Building, on lower Broadway. A few years after the Second World War, the Mathewses purchased some forty acres of scrub-oak forest on the west bank of Georgica Pond for what would be considered today an absurdly small sum, and Eddie designed a flat-roofed white-concrete-and-travertine-marble box in the then prevalent International Style, to go on a grassy site almost at the water's edge. (With its classic interior atrium and its shallow, rain-collecting fishpool, its paved terraces and its distant view of the sea, the house resembles the villas that rich Romans were accustomed to build in and around the resort town of Ostia in the first century A.D.) It was Mathews who, in the early sixties, encouraged Bunshaft to buy a couple of acres of land at the upper end of Georgica Pond, on a point along the shore which provided a view no less pleasing than the one the Mathewses enjoyed. The house Bunshaft designed was less open, less welcoming, and far less an ancient pagan mingling of man and nature than the Mathewses' house. It was, in fact, an intensely urban structure, requiring nature to knuckle under to man. Bunshaft's biographer, Carol Herselle Krinsky, has written that the East Hampton house was a second version of the Bunshafts' apartment in Manhattan House, an immense white brick structure in the East Sixties which Bunshaft and his partners helped design in the late nineteen-forties. In photographs taken many years ago, the apartment's living room and the living room of the house on Georgica Pond appear to be twins, even in respect to the pictures and tapestries hanging on their walls. As for the grounds, they were the backdrop for the Bunshafts' collection of sculptures. Krinsky writes, "The tall, thin male figure by Giacometti is placed among tall, thin trees; the rotund Miró 'Moon Bird' against a thicket; Henry Moore's 'Reclining Figure—Arch Leg' terminates the perspective from the Bunshaft bedroom." Born of Russian Jewish immigrant parents, Bunshaft often displayed an unexpectedly Prussian personality: he was hard on people, and had an overly literal sense of humor, of which his placement of a thin Giacometti in front of thin trees may well be a sample.

AS we were driving in Stewart's sparkling Ford truck from Lily Pond Lane to Georgica Pond, she recounted the lucky chance by which she learned that the Bunshaft house was for sale: "I was at a cocktail party, and I happened to overhear two young men—I guessed they were architects—talking about the house and how much they wished they could afford to buy it. I'd never seen the house, I'd never even known that it existed, but the moment they mentioned it I wanted it—just like that! I immediately called my real-estate agent, and we went to see it, and then I wanted it more than ever." Stewart learned that by the terms of Bunshaft's widow's will the property was to go to the Museum of Modern Art, along with their art collection. Nina Bunshaft died about a year ago, and the Museum placed the house on the market with a price tag of just over three million dollars. "There were nibbles but no takers," Stewart said. "I put in a bid that was a lot less than three million, and, as often happens in real-estate deals, my bid started a sudden flurry of activity, not very nice for anyone. By the time the flurry died down, I was paying the Museum's price. No matter! The place was mine."

We turned off the public road onto a driveway that wound past a flimsy-looking two-car garage and over a scraggly lawn, with, here and there, arbitrary clumps of untended hedges and other vegetation. (The clumps had been the backdrops for the Bunshafts' collection of sculpture, which had been removed by the Museum.) Stewart parked the truck in the turnaround at the end of the driveway, and then I saw this curiosity for the first time—the only house Bunshaft ever designed. Its façade consists of almost a hundred feet of undetailed travertine-and-concrete wall, about eleven feet high, with clerestory windows marching its full length under a flat roof. Two entrances pierce the blank wall, each guarded by a vertically slatted outer door. Though the slats are made of wood, they appear to be of iron, and greatly increase the building's air of being an abandoned military installation. When I hinted at the resemblance, Stewart would have none of it; perhaps the exterior, having grown shabby with age, was looking a bit faded in the bright sunlight, but she loved it just as it was and would make no changes in it. She said the

Museum was very pleased with her decision to preserve the exterior; it had feared that a buyer might come along who wished to knock down the house and put up some inappropriate novelty in its place.

We entered the house by the front door. Actually, both doors are indistinguishably "front," but one leads into a cramped passageway-vestibule and then into a combined living room–dining room, while the other opens into the same passageway at a point opposite a small kitchen. The living room–dining room measures roughly twenty-five feet by thirty-two and looks out through an immense, single-paned window and two sets of sliding glass doors onto a lawn that slopes gradually down to a travertine-capped retaining wall at the rocky edge of the pond. At one end of the house is a bedroom with a floor-to-ceiling glass wall facing east; at the other end is a studio with a glass wall facing west; and in between are two bathrooms, a furnace room, a couple of closets, and a windowless, U-shaped little kitchen.

I remembered the size of the kitchen on Lily Pond Lane, with its three stoves sporting a total of fourteen burners, and its multiplicity of sinks, marble counters, and storage cupboards, and I gestured inquiringly toward Bunshaft's tenement-style kitchen. "Oh, that! I knew from the start that that would have to go," Stewart said. "My architect, Walter Chatham, is going to turn the studio into a nice big open kitchen for me, full of light and air. I'll be able to cook there to my heart's content." Chatham is the architect who recently designed an apartment on Fifth Avenue at Seventy-second Street for Stewart. "Walter knows I am mad for stainless steel," Stewart said. "The next time you come here, the new kitchen will be ready, and no doubt it will look very much like an atomic submarine."

OUTSIDE again, strolling about the grounds, we confront the question I had driven out to East Hampton to ask: Why on earth had she, of all people, purchased the Bunshaft house? "Not so surprising," she says at once. "I was a history major at Barnard, with a minor in architectural history. I married a man named Andy Stewart, and we lived near New Haven while he attended Yale Law School. The Beinecke Rare Book Library was going up across the street. I knew that

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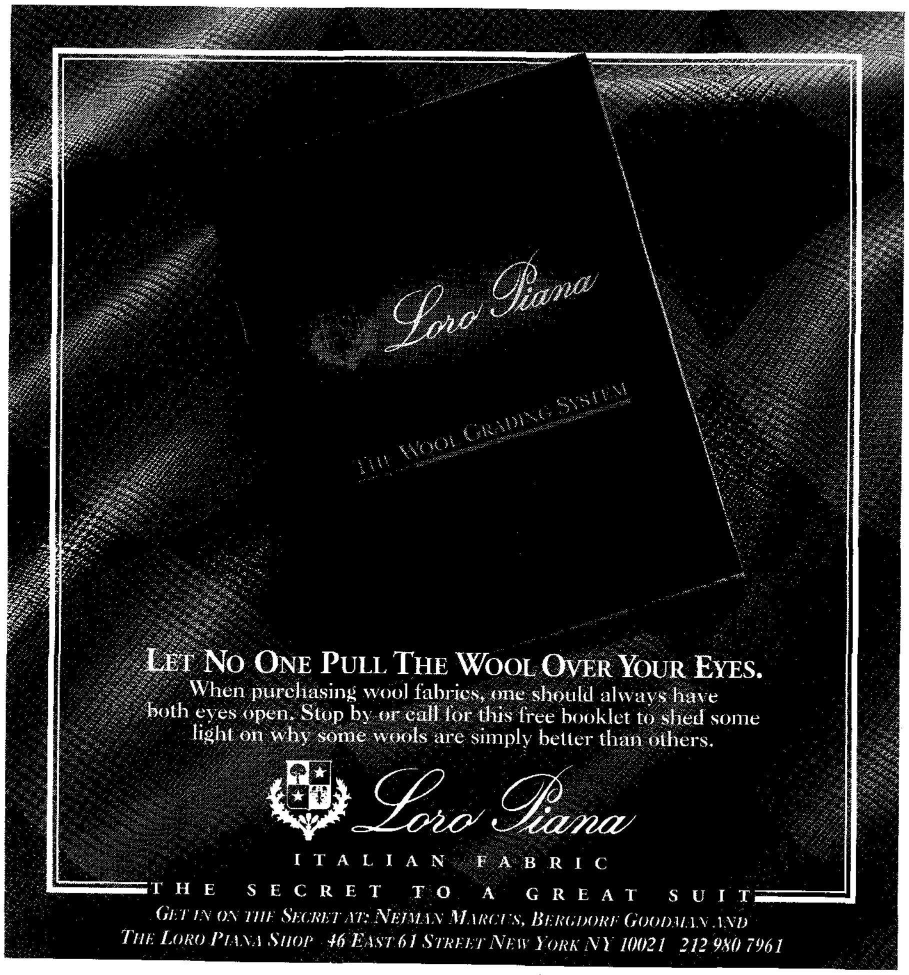

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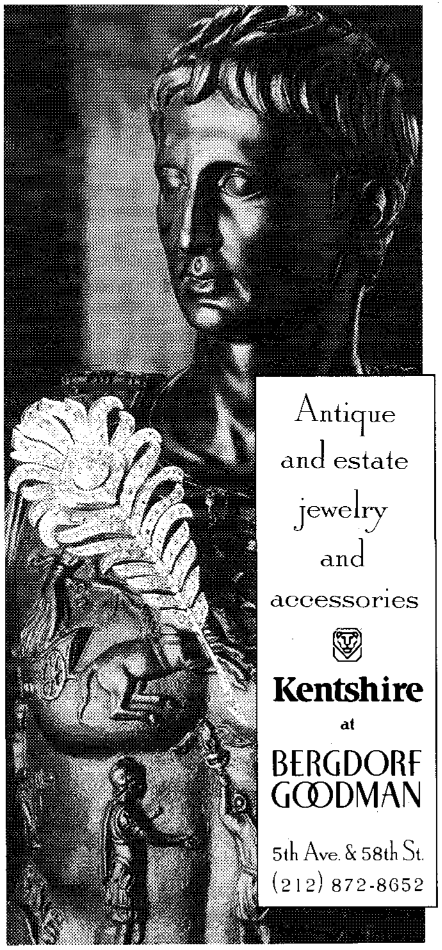
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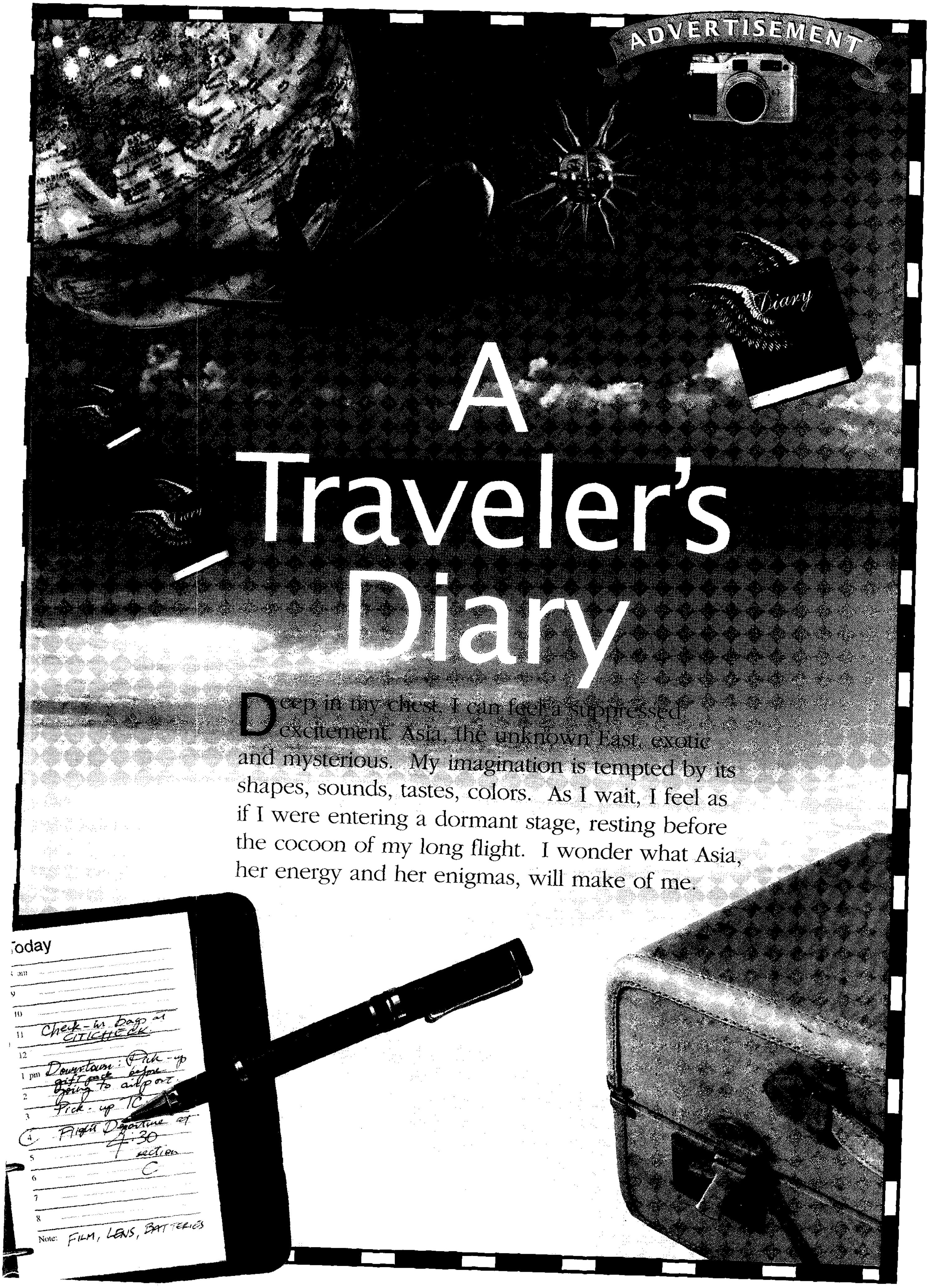
Bunshaft had designed it, and I was interested in everything he was trying to accomplish with its design. It was going to be entirely his—not like any of the Gothic and neo-Renaissance buildings that crowded all round it. To keep harsh sunlight off the books, he used panels of translucent marble instead of window glass, and I thought, How wonderful! Useful and beautiful at a single stroke! I've been looking for pieces of marble like that ever since. At last I've found some, and I'll find a use for it somewhere. Later on, when I was working as a stockbroker in Wall Street, I'd pass the Chase Manhattan Bank building every day—another Bunshaft. I watched his fame rise and then decline. Soon it could rise again. Who knows? Restoring this house may help him in that regard."

I have another question to ask. My appointed time with her is nearly up. (She is an executive and has much to accomplish every day, whether at her office, in New York; at her headquarters house, in Westport; or here, at the shore.) I say, "Everything you do professionally encourages people to rummage about in a past that is mostly fiction. What if you were a talented young architect just graduating from school? What if you aspired to design houses that would be honest expressions of our time? What would you do?"

Stewart makes an equivocal gesture—not quite a shrug. The questions go unanswered except by indirection, in the course of telling me what she believes she wouldn't do. She mentions the names of several fashionable architects—friends that we have in common—who design houses popular with her followers. No, she says, if she were a young architect she wouldn't be designing in their vein. I mention the taint of Disneyization that I see befalling the country, and perhaps the world as a whole. People seem to prefer false history to true—given the choice between visiting a real Civil War battlefield and a Disney re-creation of one, it appears that millions of Americans would prefer the Disney. So, another question. In her books, in her TV appearances, in the magazine that bears her name, is she not marketing, with incomparable success, a version of Disney make-believe? No, she says, there is a difference. What she is seeking to recover from the past and put to use in the present are principles, no doubt very old-fashioned but still of high value, which she finds inventive ways of embodying. If taken, the suggestions she makes—whether for the house or for the garden or for the act of party giving—amount to hard work, not passive, Disneyesque entertainment. Most of her followers do this hard work for themselves, and the satisfaction they gain from it is earned, not bought.

Whatever Stewart's persona may be in print or on TV, the actual person has a brisk, agreeable, no-nonsense manner. She convincingly personifies the simplest of biographical facts: she is who she appears to be. She speaks of her Polish Catholic background, of her eighty-one-year-old mother, of her daughter, Alexis (who owns and has successfully remodelled the Bridgehampton Motel), of the army of nieces and nephews who come to stay with her on Lily Pond Lane. She and her husband were divorced several years ago, but she spends much of the year in a Federal house in Westport, which they bought a few years after their marriage. It is called Turkey Hill and is becoming almost as well known throughout the country as Mount Vernon or Monticello: it is a major prop in her constantly photographed endeavors, so her followers are familiar with its every room, with every corner of its gardens and barns. Someday, they may become equally familiar with the Bunshaft house, but at the moment she thinks not. She sees the house as a place of retreat for her, as it was for Bunshaft. The monastic quality of the house appeals to her. The big kitchen that she is installing may never be put to full use.

Or, again, it may be. We hop up into her shining, high-bodied truck and set off along the driveway, and as we pass the Bunshafts' ramshackle garage Stewart mentions that she and Chatham are planning to tear it down and replace it with a garage that will hold four cars. "Four cars?" I repeat after her, as if I'd failed to hear her correctly. She nods, and I say, "Monastic?" She nods a second time. Contradiction is not to be feared. It is a necessary accompaniment to the Stewart Way. We must all face the fact that in a single lifetime we lead several simultaneous lives; our intention should be to make them reinforce one another instead of colliding. Stewart looks happy and carefree as we speed along the road back to East Hampton, to the remainder of a day of hard work that for her is akin to play. ♦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A Traveler's Diary

Deep in my chest, I can feel a suppressed excitement. Asia, the unknown East, exotic and mysterious. My imagination is tempted by its shapes, sounds, tastes, colors. As I wait, I feel as if I were entering a dormant stage, resting before the cocoon of my long flight. I wonder what Asia, her energy and her enigmas, will make of me.

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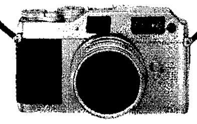
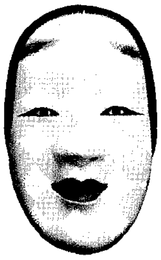
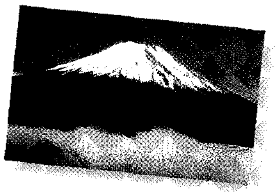
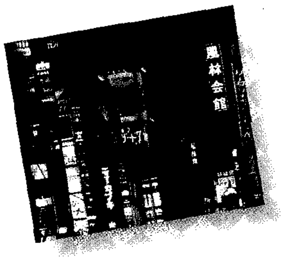




Japan

I am enchanted by the neon of Ginza, by the hundreds of *hiragana* and *katakana* typefaces glowing at me, reflected from the wet streets. How quickly you can become lost, where no words fix your place, and none proclaim your destination.





By subway, where the signs are in English, I visited the Asakusa district and its quaint old neighborhoods. Tomorrow I'll take my concierge's advice and see the Imperial Palace and the Meiji Shrine. Before I leave, I intend to spend a half day at the Tokyo National Museum. It is reputed to house one of the best collections of Japanese and Asian art in the world.

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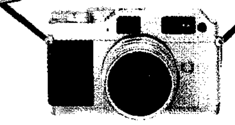
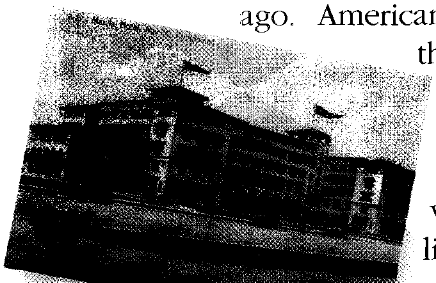
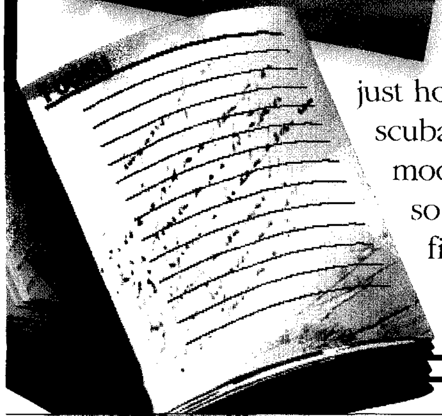


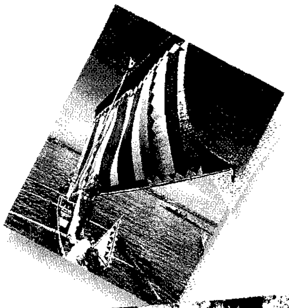
The Philippines

Yesterday I wandered the cobblestone streets of historic *Intramuros*, literally "within the walls". These walls first protected the Spanish from Chinese and Japanese pirates 300 years ago. Americans opened *Intramuros'* gates to the Filipino people twice - after the Spanish-American War of 1898 and again in 1945. Continents away, other walls were being built. Time is a great liberator.





So is the quiet of this tiny resort, just hours from Manila. I am learning to scuba dive. I might as well be on the moon, the world beneath the waves is so alien. I do not understand the vivid fish or the surreal coral. But I know peace when I find it.



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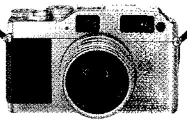
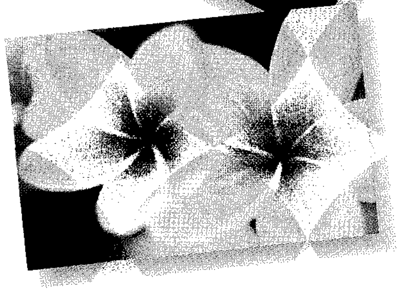
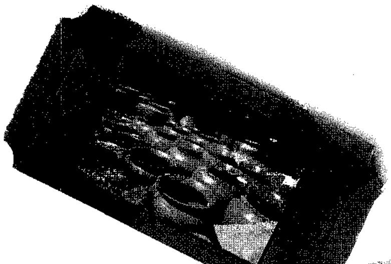


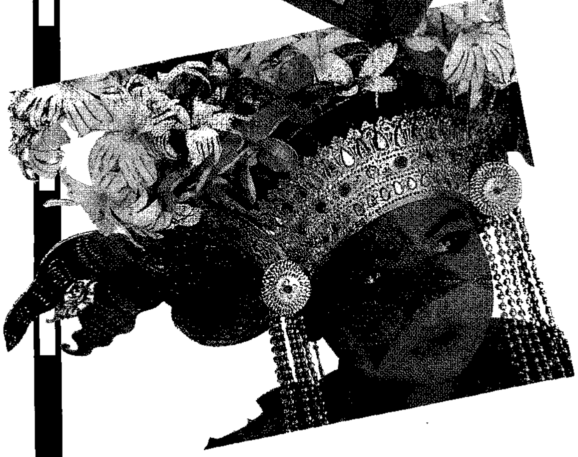
Indonesia

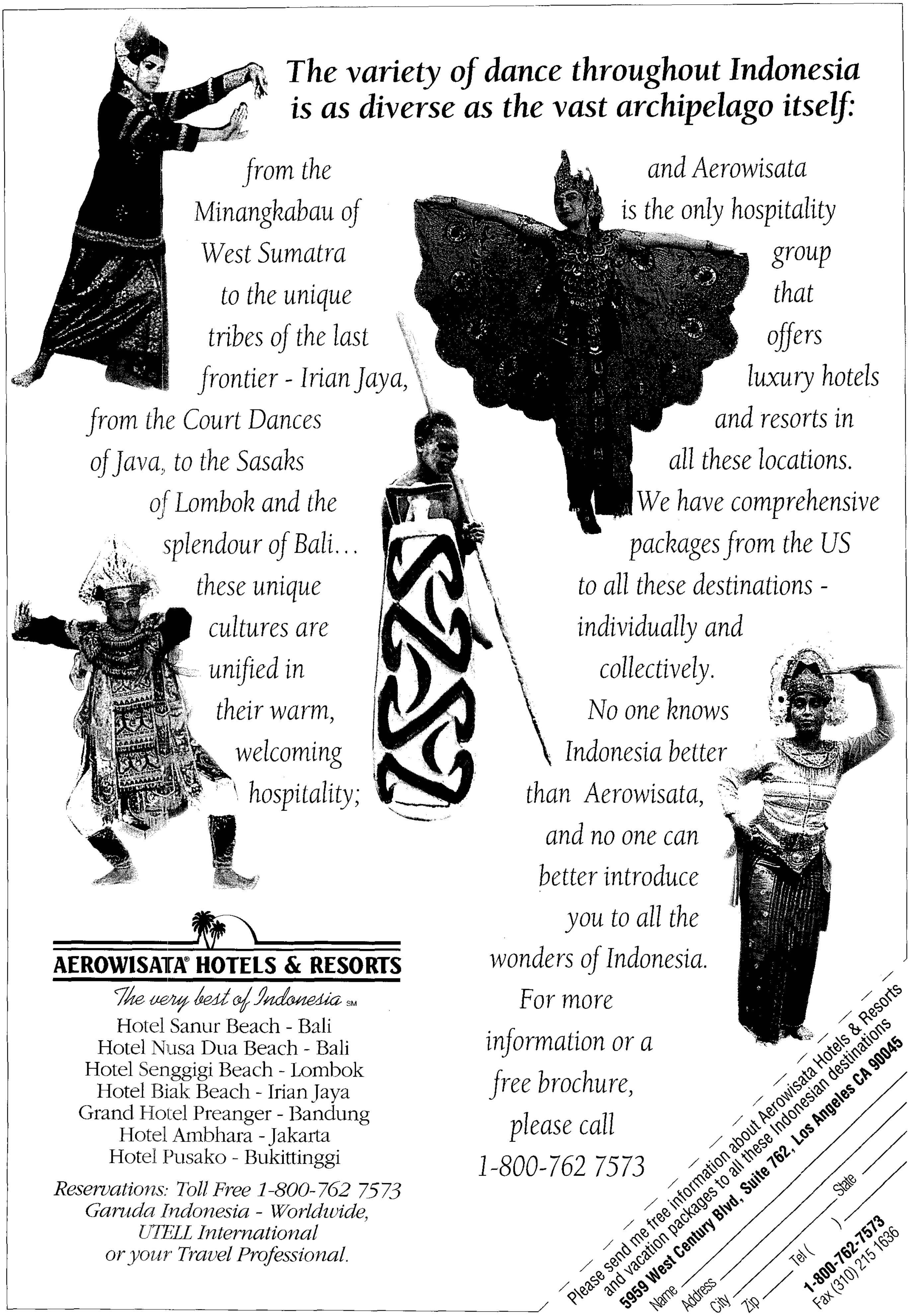


Hidden, I watched the village children practising Balinese dance in the hotel gardens. The children are beautiful, huge dark eyes and bright faces. And so absorbed in their practice, perfecting the cat - like movements, the dramatic play of hands and fluttering fingers. But then - a mistake - and they collapse in a fit of giggles.

Later, I saw dancers dressed in fantastic headdresses adorned by frangipani, the dance a whirl of gold and rich color. Tomorrow I will watch *Oleg Tambulillingan*, a work choreographed by the late I Nyoman Mario. It depicts two bumblebees, making love in a garden of flowers.







The variety of dance throughout Indonesia is as diverse as the vast archipelago itself:

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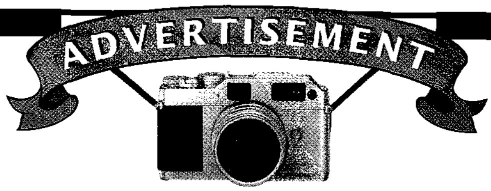
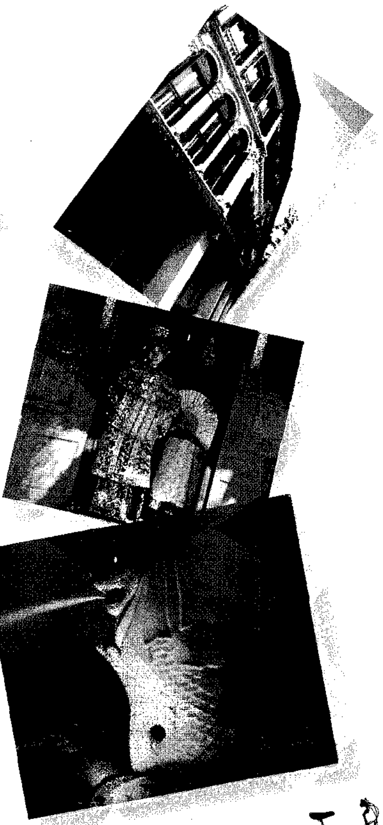




Singapore

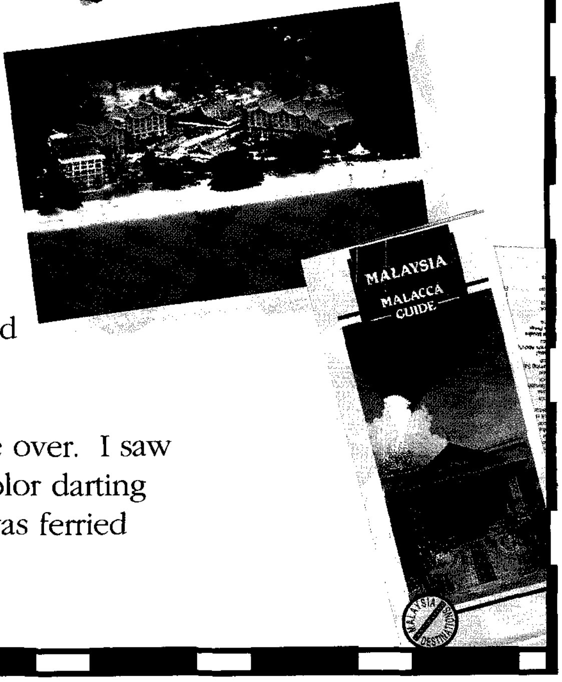
They tell you to "expect the unexpected" in Singapore. But a night safari? It's the only one in the world. I couldn't resist. Inspired by all the activity, I headed for the wilds of Bugis Street, once famed for its risque night life. The "girls" are back!

Today I opted for more relaxed pleasures - high tea at Raffles. Now I'm perched at the famed Writer's Bar. Where else would I update my diary?

Malaysia

I arrived in Kuala Lumpur by train. The station welcomes with curling turrets and arches - a Moorish fantasy. Central Market was terrific - great souvenir shops and local food served from tiny stalls.

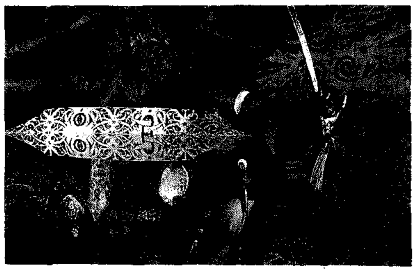
Today I stepped back in time, to Taman Negara. At 130 million years, Taman Negara is said to be the world's oldest rainforest. Tonight the air is filled with the whir of cicadas and countless insects I cannot name. But at sunrise, the birds will take over. I saw some this morning, a flurry of color darting through the undergrowth, as I was ferried upstream to the lodge.



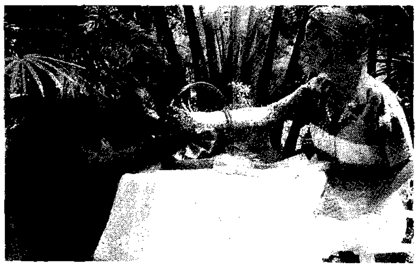
All The Colours Of The East....

Faces of the East.

Dance with the dragons.



Capture the glory of Iban chieftains.



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Thailand

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In 1995 and 1996, the whole country celebrated his 50-year reign, the world's longest. I stopped in Ayutthaya, Lopburi and Sukhothai, tracing the history of the Kingdom through the grandeur of its ancient ruined cities. I trekked the northern hills, staying with tribal people in huts perched above steep terraces. And I traveled south, to swim in its perfect seas before returning to Bangkok, which is at the center of the country's festivities.

Everywhere, in homes and in shops, I saw pictures of the King and his gracious Queen. He is much loved and respected by a nation that is grateful for his wisdom, his strength, and all that the Royal Family have done to help the people. I am glad that I visited at this time, that I have seen the fairy-tale palaces of this magical Kingdom, where it is easy to believe in "happily ever after".

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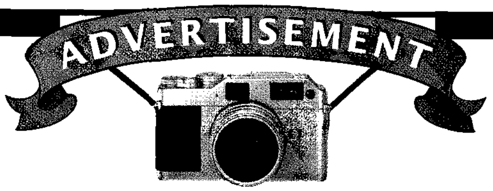

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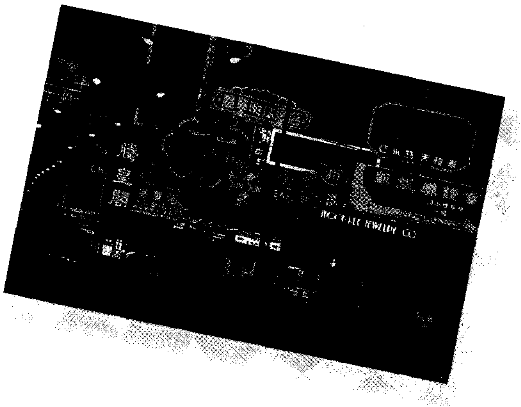
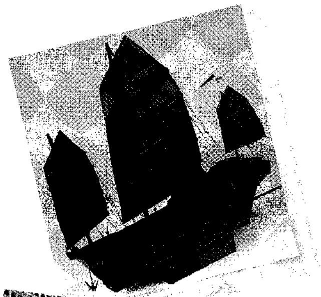
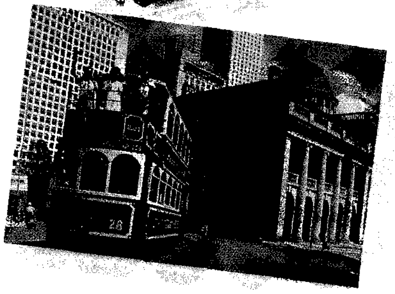
Hong Kong

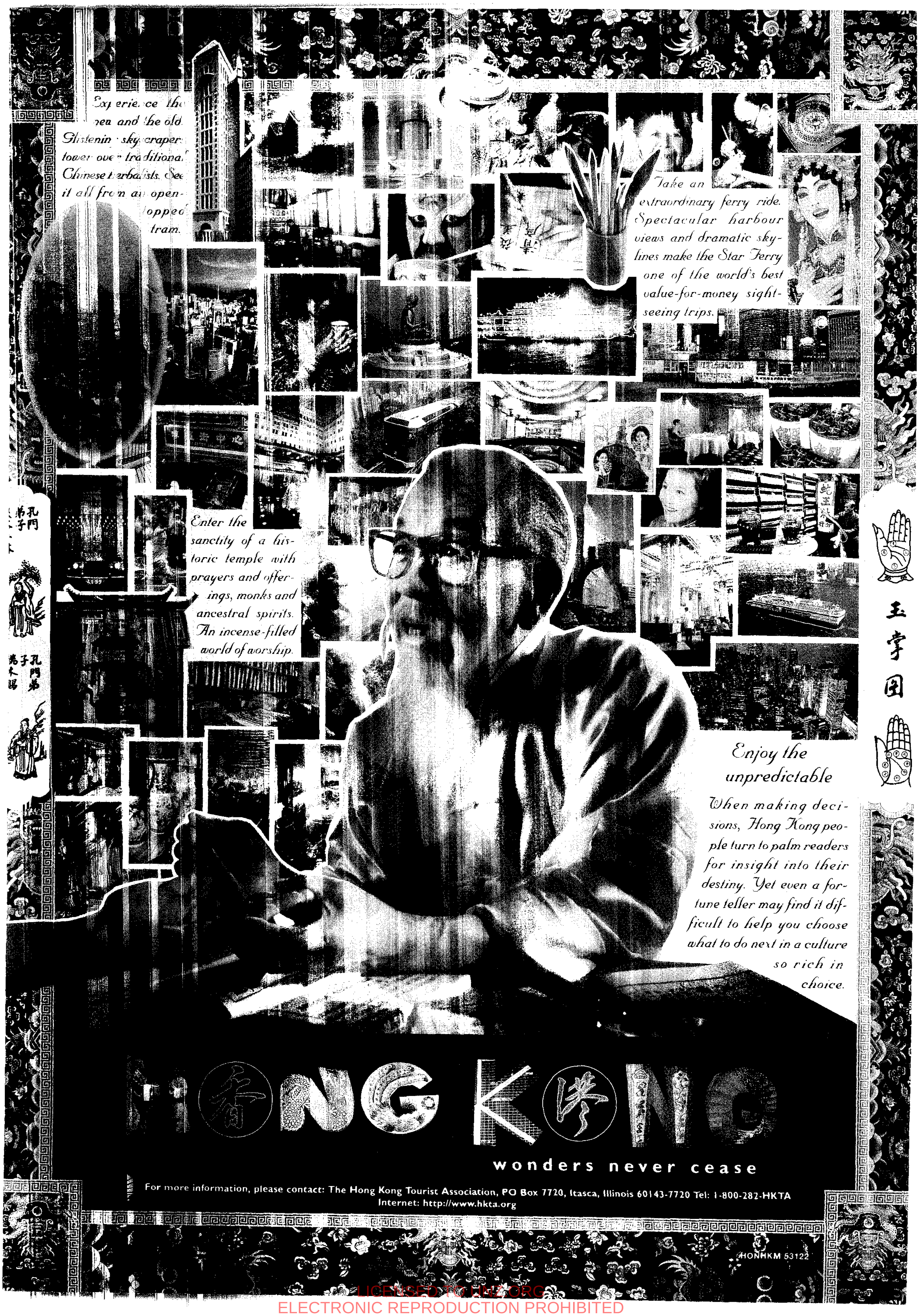
Even the bustle of Tokyo's streets didn't prepare me for the hustle of Hong Kong. The adrenalin rush of flying between high-rises to land on a runway that juts into the sea should have been warning enough. This is a city in a hurry, a city that seems about to burst with energy. From the Peak, Hong Kong Island falls away to the harbor, to the "nine dragon" hills that give Kowloon its name, and the New Territories beyond. I watched the sun set over Lantau Island, as below me, Hong Kong came alive with neon.



And yet, a ferry ride away from the city center, passed the crowd of ships in the harbor, found me in the green hills of Lantau. I visited Po Lin Monastery to see the giant bronze Buddha. You can see it winking gold against the green from the airplane. Back in town I took a taxi to Aberdeen, to the bright lights of the floating restaurants, and superb Cantonese seafood.







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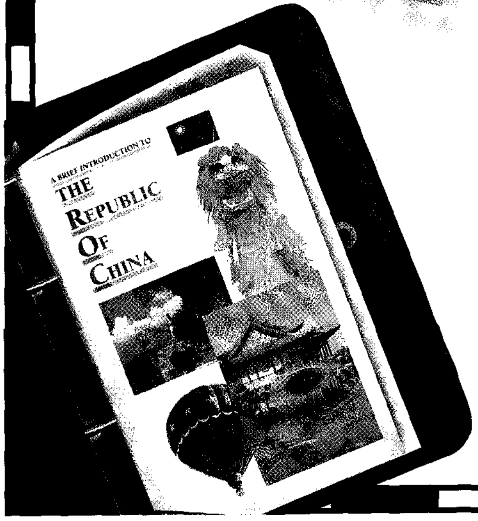
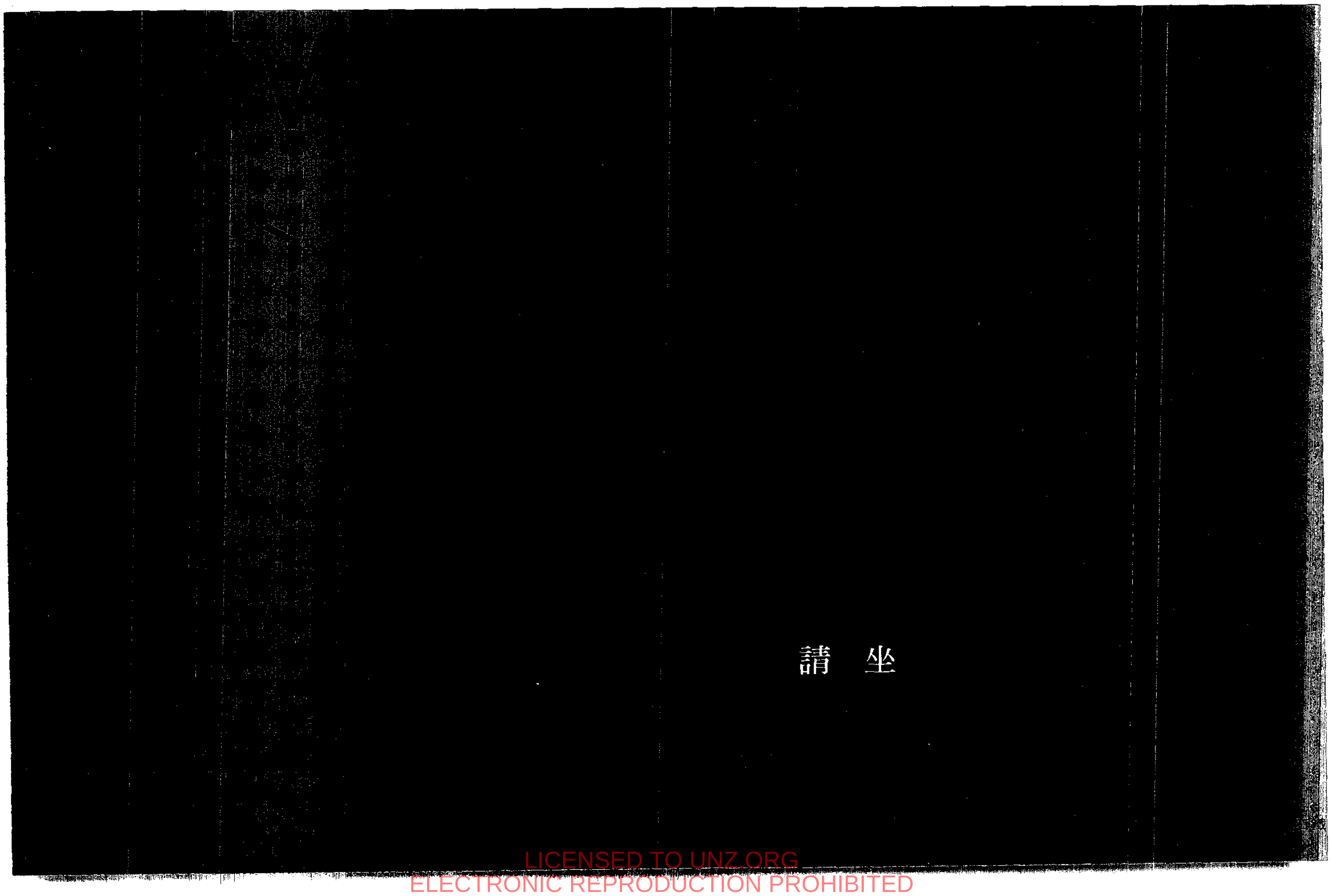
Taiwan

In the morning I went to the National Palace Museum. I felt as if I were making a pilgrimage, traveling out of the seething modernity that is Taipei to view the treasures of an ancient China. I found myself transfixed by the immense imperial seals, the translucent beauty of intricately carved alabaster, their great weight a symbol of the power an emperor once wielded.

In the afternoon I visited the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and Park - an entire city block dedicated to the memory of Generalissimo Chiang. The great hall is lovely, soaring white walls topped by a traditional gabled roof and cobalt blue tiles. My timing could not have been better - today the National Theatre and Concert Hall are staging a Chinese opera, and the spectacle is superb.





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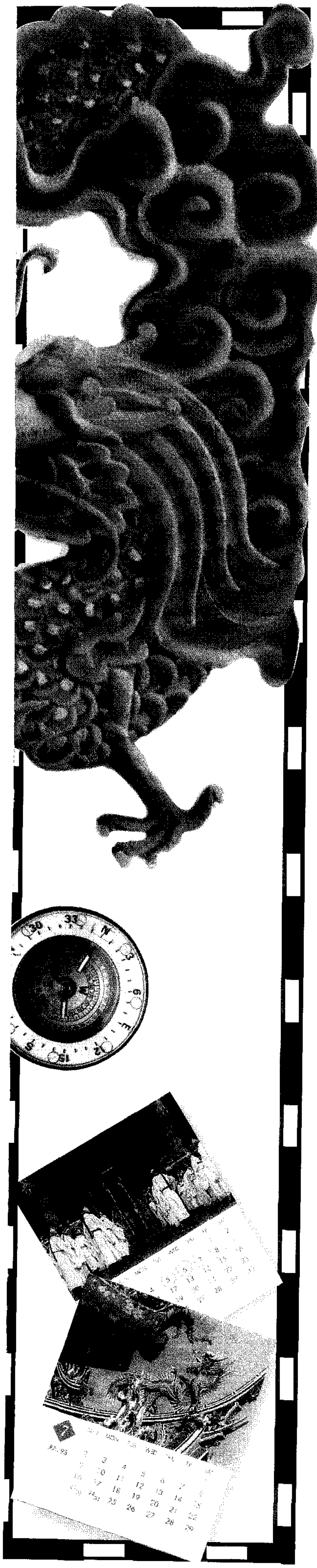

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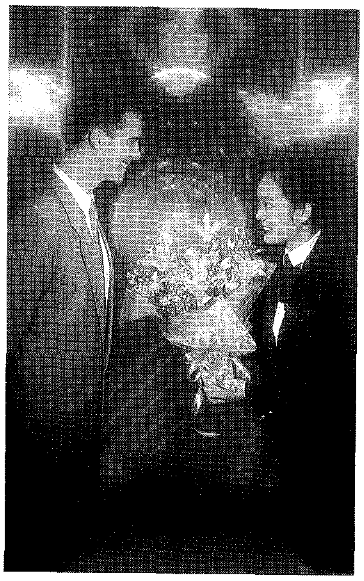

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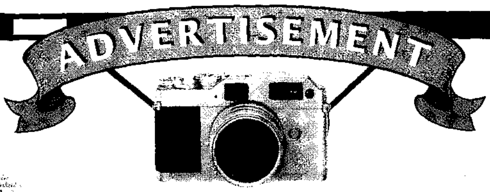
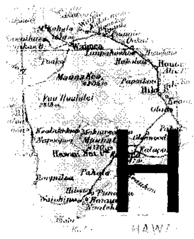
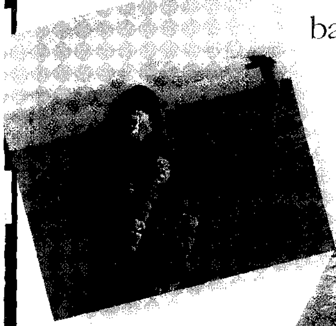


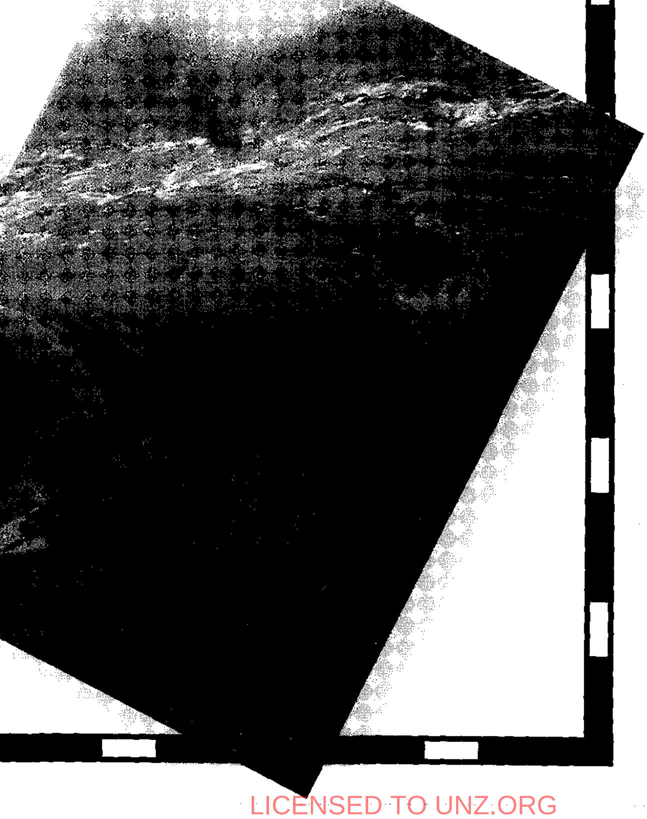


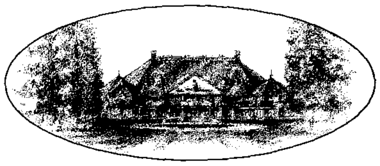
Hawaii

Hawaii has been a wonderful surprise, a perfect tropical paradise. I drove to Volcanoes National Park to see the giant Kilauea Crater, legendary home of Madame Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire. In the midst of lush jungles, the streams of sulfur and deep fissures in the scorched earth are a shock. From the rim of the volcano crater, I watched Madame Pele at her fiery work.

Yesterday I flew here, to Lanai, the pineapple isle. From the vantage point of Lanaihale, 3,370 feet above the snowy sands of Hulopoe Bay, the islands of Oaha, Molokai, Maui, Hawaii and Kahoolawe rise from the sparkling sea, each a mystery, each an invitation. I don't know why I've never been to Hawaii before, but I know I'm coming back - Aloha!







The Lodge at Koele

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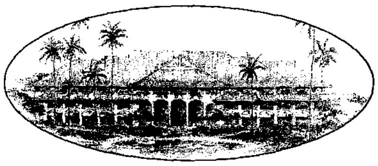

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WHO KILLED THE MIDDLE CLASS?

The economy is fine, but most Americans are not—
and the ideal that once defined how we lived is gone.

BY JOHN CASSIDY

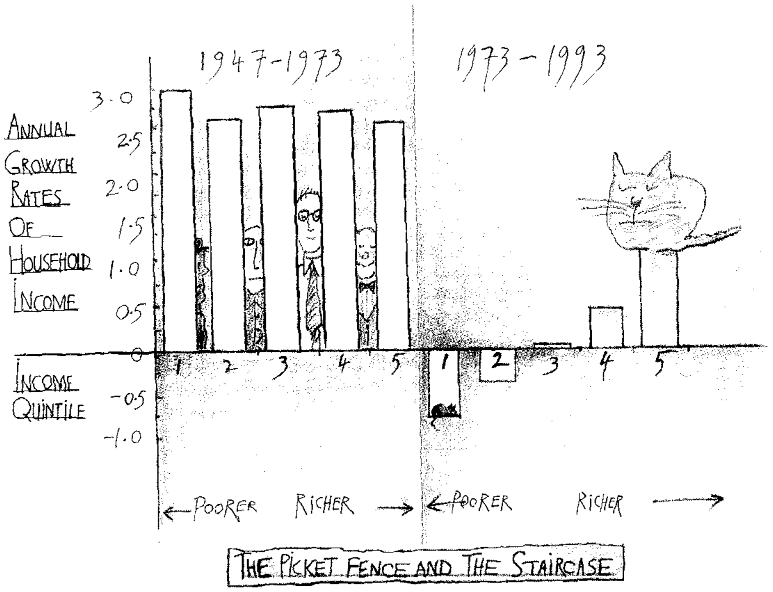
WILLIAM J. McDONOUGH, the sixty-one-year-old president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, watches his words as closely as a Savile Row tailor watches his stitches, and for good reason. Any misstatement on his part, or even an intentional but slight deviation from the previous official line, can send the financial markets into a multibillion-dollar tizzy.

McDonough shuns press conferences, but last November he invited thirty-five academics, businessmen, and journalists to a daylong conference at the New York Fed's headquarters, in lower Manhattan. When they had assembled, some from as far away as Los Angeles and London, he addressed them as follows: "I am very pleased that all of you are here today to discuss what I feel is a critical issue facing our country. The issue is, of course, the growing disparity in wages earned by different segments of our labor force. It is deeply troubling that during the nineteen-eighties the real wages of low-skilled workers in the United States have fallen sharply, both in absolute terms and relative to the wages of highly skilled workers.

"These dramatic wage developments raise profound issues for the United States," McDonough went on to say. "Issues of equity and social cohesion, issues that affect the very temperament of the country. We are forced to face the question of whether we will be able to go forward together as a unified society with a confident outlook or as a society of diverse economic groups suspicious of both the future and each other."

For a pillar of capitalism like McDonough to express concern about low wages is surprising. For him to then question whether America "will be able to go forward together as a unified society" is virtually unprecedented.

Until recently, it was an empirical law of American economics that the majority of citizens, including virtually all those who considered themselves middle-class, received steadily rising earnings. Wages might fall temporarily, of course—and fell not so temporarily during the Depression—but over a decade they ordinarily went up in line with the country's produc-



During the postwar Golden Era, real incomes rose at the same rate for everyone. But from 1973 to 1993 the gap between the classes grew enormously.

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tivity. In the three decades after the Second World War in particular, the American dream of moving to the suburbs, buying a house, and even sending the kids to college was no mere election slogan. Homeownership soared, and the living standards of the middle class—idealized in television sitcoms like "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," "Leave It to Beaver," and "The Donna Reed Show"—were the envy of the world. Whereas an English workingman might aspire to own a small row house on a grim city street, his American counterpart could look forward to acquiring a split-level house in the sprawling suburbs, with a back yard and a barbecue—and maybe even a summer cabin on a lake.

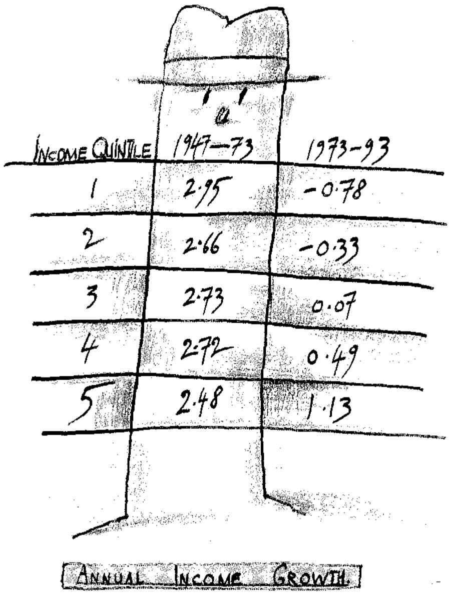
Today, that image is as dated as the television shows it spawned. Falling wages—and, of course, rising real-estate prices—have transformed the home economics of tens of millions of American families. The trend may be best illustrated with the help of a mental experiment. Imagine lining up the entire population of the United States in order of ascending income, with the poorest on the extreme left and the richest on the extreme right. The person smack in the center of the line—the median—would be, by definition, the most middle-class American alive.

In September of 1979, this person was earning (in constant, inflation-adjusted dollars) $498 a week, or $25,896 a year. In September of 1995, he or she was taking home only $475 a week, or $24,700 a year. In sixteen years, he or she had suffered a wage cut of about a hundred dollars a month, or 4.6 per cent. To put it another way, the prototypical middle-class American worked for the better part of two decades, during which he or she saw Communism collapse, four Presidents occupy the White House, and five San Francisco 49ers teams win Super Bowl rings. He or she collected eight hundred and thirty-two weekly paychecks—the last one for an amount twenty-three dollars less than the first one.

The citizens on the right of the income lineup fared very differently. In 1979, the typical full-time worker in the top third of the income distribution was earning $890 a week, or $46,280 a year. By September of this year, his or her paycheck had swelled to $960 a week, or $49,920 a year—an increase of 7.9 per cent.

The fortunate souls on the extreme right of the income lineup were doing best of all. In 1979, the richest five per cent of American families earned, on average, $137,482, according to Census Bureau data. By 1993, their income had risen to $177,518, an increase of $770 a week, or 29.1 per cent. The top one per cent of families have made spectacular gains. According to the Congressional Budget Office, between 1977 and 1989 their average income rose from $323,942 to $576,553—a gain of $252,611, or seventy-eight per cent.

The numbers prove what many Americans have suspected for a long time: living standards have fallen or stagnated for the majority of Americans, while a small minority have enjoyed a bonanza. These trends appear to be intensifying regardless of which political party is in office.



INCOME QUINTILE	1947—73	1973-93
1	2.95	-0.78
2	2.66	-0.33
3	2.73	0.07
4	2.72	0.49
5	2.48	1.13

From 1973 to 1993, only the very rich enjoyed growth comparable with that of the Golden Era.

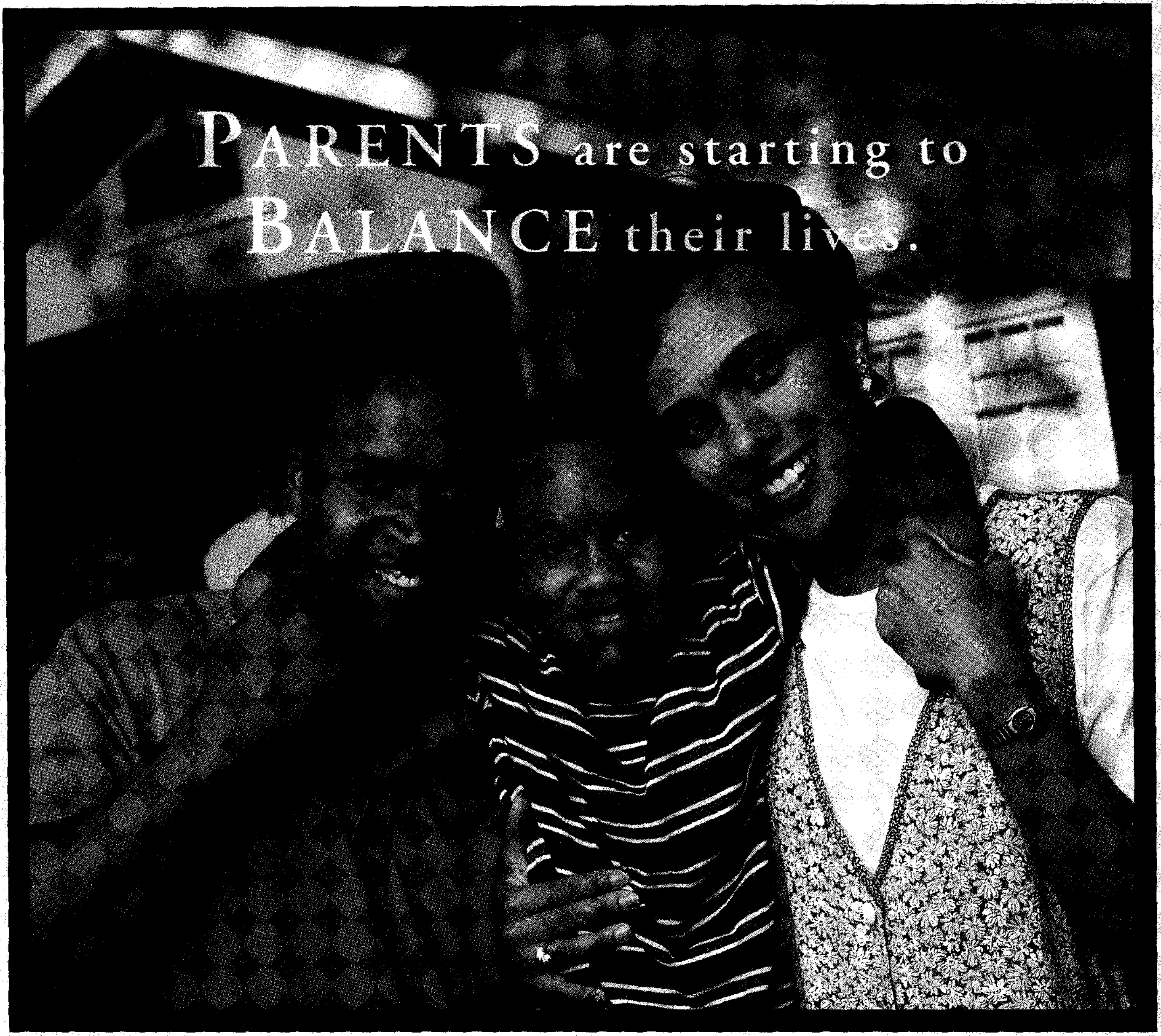
In the past three years, wages have continued to fall while productivity, profits, and stock prices have all soared. But the widespread expectation that rising productivity would jump-start wage growth has been disappointed. According to the Labor Department, output per man-hour in the non-farm business sector of the economy grew 3.1 per cent between March, 1994, and March, 1995. Both theory and history suggest that this revival in productivity should have led to rising wages and salaries. Instead, average wages and salaries fell by 2.3 per cent during the same period.

Taken together, recent wage and income trends suggest an unavoidable conclusion: America is no longer a middle-class country; indeed, the term "middle class" has lost its meaning. It turns out that McDonough was underestimating the problem—the country is *already* "a society of diverse economic groups suspicious of both the future and each other."

THE idea that the United States is a middle-class country is at least as old as de Tocqueville ("The whole country seems to have melded into one middle class") and Matthew Arnold ("That which in England we call the Middle Classes is in America virtually the nation"). By the nineteen-fifties, opinion polls showed that the vast majority of Americans referred to themselves as middle-class, regardless of their income. Despite this consensus, the exact meaning of "middle class" remained vague. In contrast to what it meant in Europe, it did not mean the bourgeoisie, who were clearly defined by Engels as "the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor." Few inhabitants of California's Orange County or New York's Suffolk County owned factories or speculated on Wall Street. Most were regular employees of major corporations like McDonnell Douglas, Grumman, and Hughes Aircraft. If they didn't go to work, they risked losing their livelihoods, their houses, and their cars. They were, in fact, not middle-class at all in the Marxian sense of the word. They were working-class, but, unlike similar people in Britain or Germany, they called themselves middle-class.

Most commentators let them get away with the theoretical confusion, and it is easy to see why. From 1945 until 1973—a period that economic historians now refer to as the Golden Era—the American economy resolutely refused to conform to the pattern predicted by the left-wing graybeards. Yes, the rich got richer, but almost everybody else got richer with them, and at roughly the same pace. The spoils of economic growth were divided remarkably evenly. Broadly speaking, all Americans' incomes doubled—secretaries', factory workers', bank executives'.

The easiest way to see this is by looking at the Census Bureau figures for long-term growth rates in family incomes presented by the economists Lawrence Mishel and Jared Bernstein, in their book "The State of Working America." Family incomes are generally higher than in-



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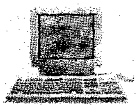

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Your race run, the rest of us,
mother, sisters, sisters' boyfriends,
ran repairs. Trimmed the hedge,
whited the walls, weeded the stones.

The place looked five years younger—
you might not have recognized it.
It took you dead to harness us,
give us some common, Tolstoyan purpose.

It was the day the ants queened themselves,
or whatever they do. Got to the end
and came back all self-conscious with silver wings,
folding stuff they hardly knew what to do with.

Like the Ossis in Berlin, they got everywhere
(a run on cuckoo clocks). The clever ones
would go far, to be in position for
the next pedestrian incarnation.

—MICHAEL HOFMANN

dividual earnings, because many families have more than one earner. A chart that is particularly worth examining divides the nation's 68.5 million families into fifths, or quintiles, with the poorest fifth on the left and the richest on the right, and covers two periods: from 1947 to 1973 and from 1973 to 1993.

As Paul Krugman, an economist at Stanford University, has noted, the 1947-73 graph looks like a picket fence, which is entirely fitting: during the Golden Era, income growth, like the picket fence, was an icon of middle-class America. The annual growth rate of family income was between 2.4 and three per cent, regardless of where the family stood in the income distribution. Through the magic of compound arithmetic, this annual growth rate translated into a doubling of real income for every quintile during the twenty-six years between 1947 and 1973. Roughly speaking, the incomes of families that stood at $10,000 a year in 1947 had risen to $20,000 by 1973: those that were $25,000 in 1947 had jumped to $50,000 by 1973; and those that stood at $50,000 in 1947 had made it to $100,000 twenty-six years later.

A glance at the 1973-93 chart shows that the picket fence has been replaced by a small staircase, and some of the staircase is underground. This chart reflects two basic facts about contemporary America: over-all productivity growth is much lower than it used to be; and the rewards of this growth are no longer shared equally. The bottom two-fifths of American families saw their income fall in the past two decades. Despite the increasing number of working mothers, the average family in the middle quintile saw its income basically stagnate, rising slightly from $36,556 in 1973 to $37,056 in 1993—a gain of only 1.35 per cent over twenty years. Only the top forty per cent enjoyed any income growth, and only the very rich enjoyed growth comparable with that of the Golden Era.

Some conservative economists have attempted to challenge these findings, but with little success. Including non-cash income, such as health-care benefits and employer pension contributions, changes the numbers slightly but does not alter the over-all trends; nor does adjusting the calculations to account for changing family size. However the figures are shuffled, the basic picture remains the same: the staircase has replaced the picket fence, and the country has experienced an unprecedented redistribution of income toward the rich.

A simple measure of this inequality can be obtained by looking at the share of total income enjoyed by different seg-

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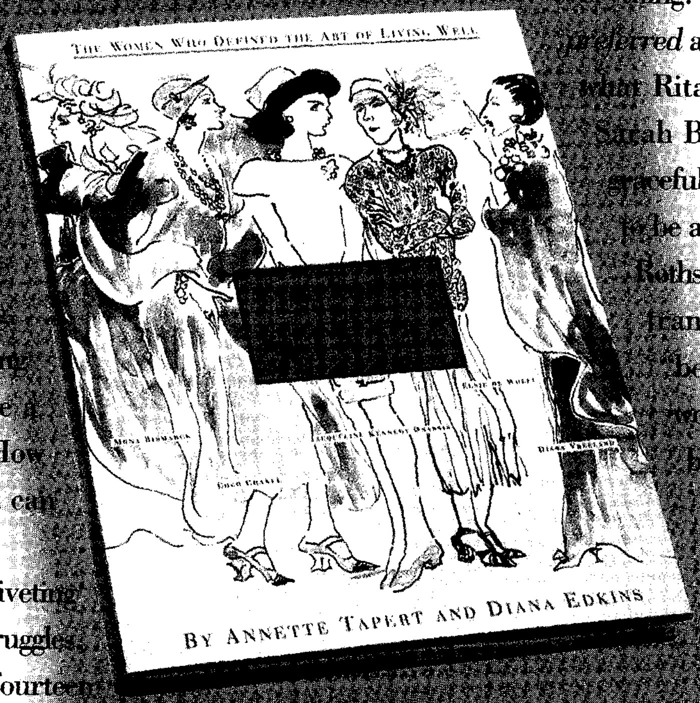
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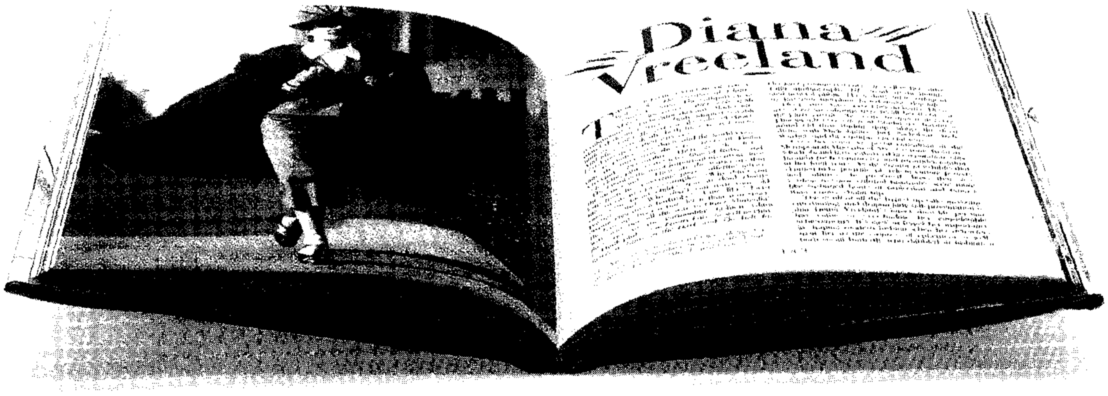
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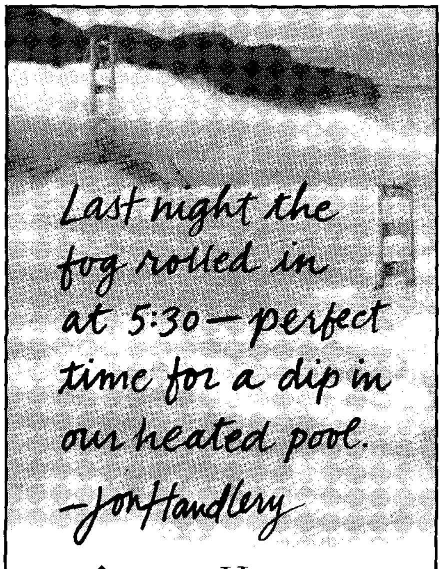
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ments of the population. According to the Census Bureau, in 1973 the richest fifth of the nation's households received 43.6 per cent of the aggregate household income. By 1993, their share had increased to 48.2 per cent. The richest five per cent of households did best of all: their share of income increased from 16.6 per cent in 1973 to twenty per cent in 1993.

With all this growth at the top, the middle was squeezed. In 1973, the three-fifths of households in the center of the income distribution received 52.2 per cent of the aggregate household income. By 1993, their share had slipped to 48.2 per cent. (The poorest fifth also suffered: their share fell from 4.2 per cent in 1973 to 3.6 per cent in 1993.) These shifts may sound minor, but they represent a truly historic transfer of resources toward the wealthy. For example, the increase in the share of the top quintile involved an annual transfer of income from the middle class to the rich of about $275 billion—or roughly $4,500 per middle-class household.

The staircase graph and the changing distribution of income suggest that the country has now split into four groups. At the top, there is an immensely wealthy élite, which has never had it so good. At the bottom, there is an underclass, which is increasingly divorced from the rest of society. And between these extremes there are, instead of a unified middle class, two distinct groups: an upper echelon of highly skilled, highly educated professionals, who are doing pretty well; and a vast swath of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, who are experiencing falling wages, stagnant or declining living standards, and increased economic uncertainty. To label this group "middle class" doesn't make sense. The phrase implies two things—rising living standards and a high degree of economic security—that no longer apply.

Few politicians are willing to admit this publicly. Appealing to the disaffected "middle class" is now the central goal of everybody from Bill Clinton to Newt Gingrich, and numerous books have been written on the subject. Robert Reich, the Secretary of Labor, has been issuing warnings about rising inequality for years, but he still refers to the United States as a "middle-class country." In a telephone interview from his office at the Labor Department, Reich defended the phrase. He conceded that "in economic terms, it makes less sense than it did in the three decades after the Second World War," but he suggested that it still had meaning "for reasons that have more to do with sociology and history than economics."

That may be true, but sociology and history go where economics leads. If the free market has decided, in its infinite but mysterious wisdom, that the American middle class is doomed, then the politicians will eventually have to wake up and accept the fact.

IN Hollywood, where pandering to market forces has been raised to an art form, the wake-up call came years ago. Prime-time sitcom producers, in particular, have long been aware of the truth that the politicians dare not utter. As a result, the Simpsons, the Bundys, and the Conners have replaced the Cleavers, the Stones, and the Nelsons as the archetypal American families. These shows are well grounded in reality. They all feature nuclear families, which are still the typical living arrangement, despite the growth of single-parent households. (In 1993, according to the Census Bureau, there were 53.2 million families headed by married couples and 12.4 million headed by females, with no male present.)

Homer Simpson, Al Bundy, and Dan Conner are excellent examples of the seventy-five per cent of American men who do not have a college degree and are feeling the pinch. Between 1979 and 1995, according to the Labor Department, the median male worker saw his annual earnings tumble 11.5 per cent, from $31,317 to $27,716. Those who didn't go to college fared even worse. Lawrence Mishel and Jared Bernstein point out that between 1973 and 1993 the hourly wages of high-school graduates and high-school dropouts fell by 14.7 per cent and 22.5 per cent, respectively.

With men's wages plummeting during those two decades, married women came under increasing pressure to enter the workforce, and that development was also picked up in Hollywood. While Harriet Nelson stayed at home and looked after the family, Roseanne Conner has held at least six jobs in eight seasons. There are millions of women like Roseanne. In 1979, the proportion of families with children under eighteen in which both parents worked year-round was less than one in five. By 1993, it had grown to almost one in three. Women with very young children were also increasingly likely to work. Twenty years ago, only thirty-one per cent of all women with children under two years of age were in the labor force. Earlier this year, that figure was found to be more than fifty-five per cent.

As more women went to work, a surprising thing happened: their average wages went up. According to the Joint Economic Committee, the hourly wage of the typical working woman in the middle-income quintile rose from $8.45 in 1979 to $9.23 in 1989, an increase of 9.2 per cent. The increase in women's earnings wasn't enough to offset completely the slippage in their husbands' still substantially higher wages—men in the same income group saw their hourly wages fall from $15.92 an hour to $15.04 in the same period—but it prevented the fall in family income from turning into a rout.

The big squeeze was reflected in changed spending patterns. Middle-income families, with their incomes stagnating, were forced to spend an ever-expanding share of their income on three of the basic necessities: housing, utilities, and health care. This point is demonstrated in the Labor Department's Consumer Expenditure Survey, a vast study based on in-depth interviews with twenty thousand households. Between 1973 and 1993, the Labor Department found, the percentage of total income spent on housing by the typical household in the middle-income quintile rose from 23.4 per cent to 31.6 per cent; the percentage spent on utilities rose from 5.6 to 7.8 per cent; and the percentage spent on health care rose from 4.3 per cent to 6.7 per cent. Adding up these numbers yields the conclusion that the typical American household is now spending almost half its income—46.1 per cent—on these three necessities. A generation ago, only a third—33.3 per cent—of the family's income went for these expenses. (The percentage spent on another necessity—food—has remained relatively stable, at about sixteen per cent.)

According to the Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac home-price index, the average price of houses across the nation increased by nearly three hundred and thirty per cent between the start of 1975 and the middle of 1995, while the consumer price index went up about two hundred and twenty

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per cent. These figures suggest that house prices have more than doubled in the past two decades. The increase has affected everybody, but first-time home buyers have been hit the hardest, because they were not on the real-estate ladder when prices took off. (The fact that in some areas housing prices have levelled off or fallen somewhat during the past five years hasn't really offset the basic problem.) As a result, fewer young people can now afford to buy a first home. According to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, homeownership among people between twenty-five and twenty-nine years old declined from 43.3 per cent in 1980 to 34.6 per cent in 1993.

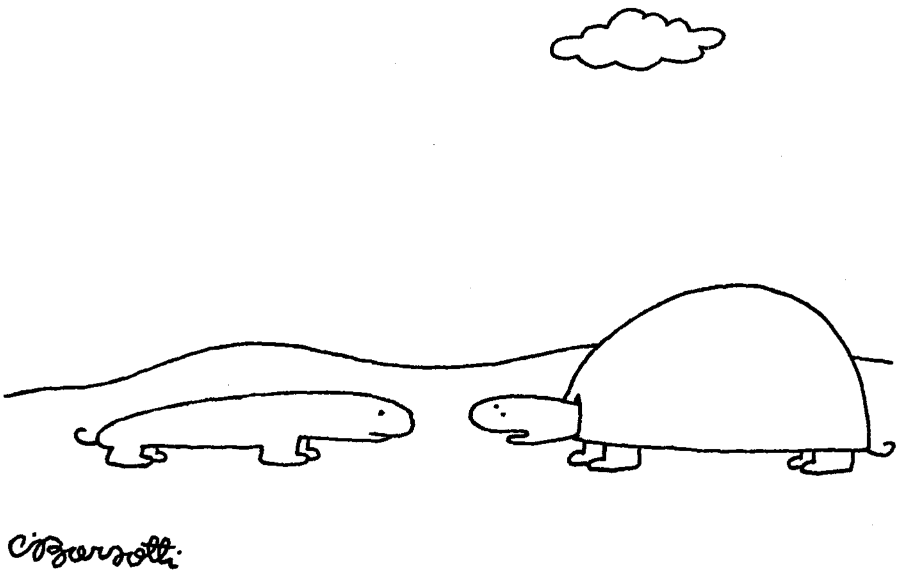
The rising cost of real estate was particularly noticeable in New York City. In 1974, the average price of a Manhattan coöperative apartment was approximately $24,500 per room, according to the Real Estate Board of New York. In July of 1995, the cost was $85,565 per room. These figures, which are adjusted for inflation, suggest that the cost of Manhattan real estate has more than tripled in a generation—a fact that helps to explain why so few middle-class families can afford to live here.

THE dramatic rise in inequality has had one beneficial side effect: it has provided gainful employment for hundreds of economists, who have been burrowing away in universities and research institutes trying to solve the mystery of who killed the middle class. Sad to report, they have yet to come up with a single murderer. Instead, there are several prime suspects and a morass of conflicting theories and evidence.

The facts to be explained are not in dispute. "Virtually everything about the wage structure has widened in recent years," Claudia Goldin, an economic historian at Harvard, points out. The two most glaring developments have been the rising premiums earned by highly educated workers and the soaring compensation received by top executives.

Despite the common perception that the United States is a highly educated country, only about one in four working-age Americans has a college degree, and the ones with degrees were the only educational group to enjoy rising earnings during the nineteen-eighties. Since wages fell for the seventy-five per cent of the population without college degrees, the gap between college graduates and everybody else widened sharply. In 1979, the average hourly wage of a college graduate was $15.52, while that of the average high-school graduate was $11.23—a premium of thirty-eight per cent. By 1993, the average college graduate's hourly wage had risen to $15.71, while the average high-school graduate's had fallen to $9.92—a premium of fifty-eight per cent.

Meanwhile, the gap between the shop floor and the executive suite turned into a chasm. Twenty years ago, the typical chief executive officer of a large American company earned about forty times as much as a typical worker did. Now he earns a hundred and ninety times as much, according to Graef Crystal, an expert on execu-



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tive compensation. In a sample of four hundred and twenty-four very large companies, Crystal found that last year the average compensation of a chief executive officer was nearly $3.7 million.

Why this rise in inequality occurred is still something of a mystery. The one thing we do know for certain is that it had nothing to do with taxation. This bit of knowledge will disappoint both conservatives who lay the blame for the middle-class squeeze on a growing tax burden and liberals who link rising wealth concentration to regressive tax policies. But it is indisputable: the fact is that the rise in inequality happened before the I.R.S. got its hands on anybody's paycheck.

All the statistics in this article having to do with the changing distribution of wages and income are pre-tax numbers. Post-tax calculations show slightly higher shares of aggregate income going to the poor and middle-income groups but the same over-all trend of sharply increasing inequality. It was the free market, not the I.R.S., that decreed that most people's wages would fall or stagnate after 1973. And it was the free market that handed out pay bonanzas at the top of the income distribution.

Once the tax man was acquitted of all charges, economists went in search of other culprits. They found four: trade, technology, the decline of labor unions, and immigration. Most reasonable economists now agree that a combination of all four is required to explain what has happened, and even then some things remain unknown.

The impact of trade is controversial. Populists of the right like Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot claim that low-cost competition from the Third World is the major factor undermining middle-class jobs and wages, and that claim is echoed by liberals such as Ralph Nader and Jesse Jackson. Supporters of this argument often lean toward protectionism. Arrayed on the other side of the aisle—the free-trade side—is most of the American establishment, including the multinational corporations, Wall Street, and the majority of both political parties. The free-traders argue that trade increases the prosperity of the country and raises everybody's welfare. The political struggle is echoed in an equally fierce intellectual debate, which revolves around a famous model developed in the nineteen-forties by Wolfgang Stolper, of the University of Michigan, and Paul Samuelson, the Nobel laureate and grand old man of neoclassical economics. Their model—known as the Factor Price Equalization Theorem—implies that when two countries like the United States and Mexico trade with each other, the wage rates for skilled labor and unskilled labor in these countries will eventually be equalized. If that is the case, free trade will have dire consequences for American workers.

A number of economists—notably George Borjas, of the University of California at San Diego—have updated Samuelson's model and applied it to the past two decades. Borjas maintains that at least twenty-five per cent of the increase in wage inequality during that period can be attributed to the rising volume of international trade.

Other economists have disputed this conclusion on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Jagdish Bhagwati, of Columbia, points out that Samuelson's model works only if a number of special conditions that don't exist in the real world are satisfied. Robert Lawrence, of Harvard's Kennedy School, notes that a lot of American trade is carried on with developed countries, such as Japan and Germany, whose workers earn just as much as Americans. Moreover, even though both imports and exports have grown sharply, they still make up only about a ninth of the United States economy, while wages have been falling across the board.

Many economists believe that the major cause of falling wages is technological progress, especially the rapid spread of computers in factories and offices throughout the country. The argument is straightforward: computers raise the productivity of workers who are educated enough to use them, and therefore raise their wages; at the same time, computers replace many unskilled workers—such as mailroom sorters, switchboard operators, and bank tellers—thus putting downward pressure on the wages of anyone who is computer-illiterate.

This theory has obvious intuitive appeal, but it is hard to measure technological change, and gathering direct evidence has proved difficult. John Bound and George Johnson, of the University of Michigan, have produced statistical findings that support the technological-progress model, but even they recently admitted that "it is very difficult to claim

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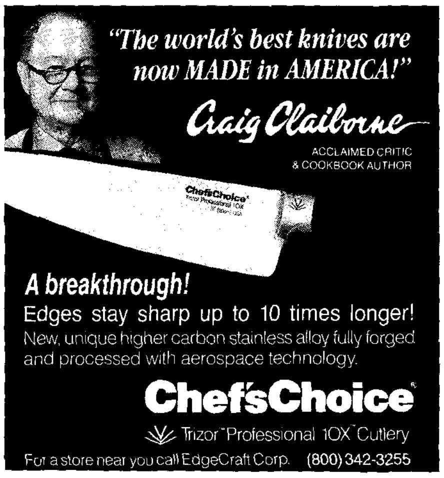
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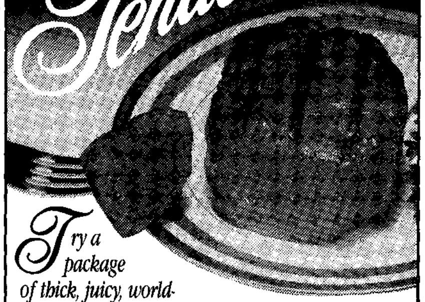

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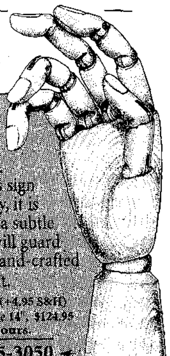

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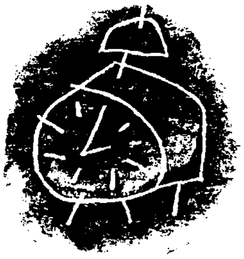
to have found a 'smoking gun.'" A few clues have been provided by Alan Krueger, of Princeton: he pointed out that the share of the labor force that uses computers jumped from 24.6 per cent in 1984 to 37.4 per cent in 1989 (it has undoubtedly jumped a great deal more since then), and he went on to show that workers who use computers earn between ten and fifteen per cent more than comparable workers who don't use them.

Most economists agree that the demise of the trade-union movement and a surge in the immigration of unskilled workers have also contributed to middle-class woes. In the nineteen-fifties, a third of the total labor force was unionized. With the gradual decline of mass production and the more rapid rise of aggressive management, union membership in the private sector had tumbled to about eleven per cent by 1994. According to a study by Richard Freeman, of Harvard, the decline of organized labor can help explain as much as half of the increase in wage inequality.



The role of rising immigration is more difficult to isolate statistically, but it has certainly boosted the supply of unskilled workers, and thereby added to the downward pressure on the low-paid. Legal immigration alone is now running at about nine hundred thousand a year, and the educational profile of the new arrivals has dropped sharply. According to Borjas, in 1990 almost a quarter of all high-school dropouts were immigrants, and about a third of the fall in the relative wages of these dropouts can be attributed to immigration.

As this brief surf through the academic literature suggests, it is difficult to apportion blame precisely among the various causes. A rough estimate was provided by a straw poll taken at the New York Fed conference in November. The participants, who included many of the economists mentioned in this article, laid the blame as follows: sixty per cent on the rise of technology, ten per cent on trade, and thirty per cent on other factors, among them immigration and the decline of labor unions.

All these estimates are suspect because some of the factors probably interacted and reinforced each other. The rise of global competition may have encouraged managers to break unions and invest in computer technology. Similarly, the threat of corporate relocation and the growth of cheap immigrant labor may have contributed to the weakness of labor unions. The statistical studies beloved of economists have great difficulty handling this sort of interdependence, but it is probably crucial in explaining why the over-all economic climate has become so unfavorable to ordinary workers.

What nobody has yet explained satisfactorily is the explosion in incomes at the top of the distribution. What is the economic justification for paying Michael Eisner nearly fifty million dollars a year, Deion Sanders five million dollars a season, or Jim Carrey twenty million dollars a movie? The most novel explanation was originally proposed by Sherwin Rosen, of the University of Chicago, in a 1981 paper called "The Economics of Superstars." (An updated and popularized version of the same story has just been published in a book entitled "The Winner-Take-All Society," by Robert Frank, of Cornell University, and Philip Cook, of Duke University.) According to this theory, Eisner, Sanders, and Carrey are the beneficiaries of a technological progress that has transformed local labor markets into global auction houses. Modern manufacturing and distribution techniques, like compact disks and cable and satellite systems, mean that the services of stars can be reproduced, or "cloned," at minimal extra cost. If people in Chicago, or even in Sydney, want to hear a few jokes, they can switch on the "Tonight Show" instead of going to their local comedy cellar. As a result, customers all over the world can bid for the services of Jay Leno, while the average comic goes broke.

This theory has obvious relevance to the entertainment industry, but it is difficult to see how it explains the growth of inequality in areas such as law, banking, and medicine. Even among attorneys, the rate at which the top dogs get mega-rich has gone up sharply.

ON Labor Day, Bill Clinton visited the site of the former Fort Ord, in Monterey, California, and gave a speech laying out his themes for next year's Presidential campaign. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his main theme sounded suspiciously like James Carville's 1992 brainwave: "It's the economy, stupid."

Of course, Clinton used more words. "We are at a period of historic change—the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other," he declared. "If you had told me on the day I became President that in thirty months we'd have over seven million jobs, the stock market would be at forty-seven hundred, corporate profits would be at a record high, we'd have two and a half million new homeowners, we'd have the largest number of new small businesses recorded in any two-year period since the end of World War II, but the median wage would go down one per cent, I wouldn't have believed it. And most of you wouldn't, either." He went on to say, "But technology is changing so fast that the working people of this country, who are bringing our economy back, have not gotten their fair share of our prosperity. And that is our biggest challenge on this Labor Day."

Unfortunately, neither Clinton nor Bob Dole nor Colin Powell can meet that challenge, because it can't be met—at least, in the short term. No politician can make median incomes start climbing again, but none of them can admit this elementary fact, because they are still locked into the middle-class myth with its alluring offer of rising prosperity for everyone. Instead, all sides promise what they know they can't deliver: a return to the Golden Era.

At least the Democrats have, in Robert Reich, somebody who understands what is happening. "There is a subtle contest going on in Washington about whose description of the central question facing the country is more accurate," he explained recently. "Republicans want Americans to believe that the central question is balancing the budget, getting control over public expenditures, and reducing the size of government. But in my view the central question, which has been gaining steam over the last fifteen years, is how to strengthen the middle class and revive upward mobility."

Given that the basic problem is an oversupply of unskilled workers and a shortage of skilled workers, Reich proposes federally subsidized college loans for lower-income students, federally financed apprenticeships for unskilled youths, and federally financed vouchers for unemployed workers to spend on retraining. These measures would eventu-

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ally reduce the excess supply of unskilled workers and raise wages.

The economic theory is sound; the problem is putting it into practice. To have a substantial impact, Reich's programs would have to be enormous. According to James Heckman, of the University of Chicago, a training scheme large enough to return the earnings differential between skilled and unskilled workers to its 1979 level would cost upward of a hundred and seventy billion dollars a year, or more than a thousand dollars per taxpayer. Heckman supports the idea of spending that amount, if it is well targeted, but Reich, on being presented with this figure, admitted that "in the current budget climate anything like that is certainly out of the question."

Most Republicans, for their part, completely ignore falling wages and rising inequality. Instead, they blame the government for the country's problems and recommend spending cuts and tax cuts that would have little, if any, impact on wages and earnings. It was the market, after all, not the government, that put a stop to middle-class income growth after 1973. Contrary to popular myth, the over-all burden of taxation has remained remarkably constant. In 1973, federal taxes swallowed 19.5 per cent of the gross domestic product, and in 1993 the figure was 19.9 per cent. Adding in state and local taxes raises the figures but doesn't shift the trend line. The total share of the national income taken by federal, state, and local taxes was 31.1 per cent in 1973 and 30.9 per cent in 1993.

If the country were really serious about reversing the growth of inequality, it would have to consider raising taxes, not cutting them. The only thing that could be guaranteed to diminish the effects of rising inequality quickly is a steep increase in taxes on the rich. With the top five per cent of American households receiving twenty per cent of the country's income, and the top fifth receiving almost half, there is now a lot more rich income to tax. "The old line that there just isn't enough money at the top to be meaningful just isn't true anymore," Paul Krugman says. "You don't have to be Huey Long to think there is some soaking that can be usefully done up there."

Unless the late Louisiana governor rises from his grave and runs for President, there is little prospect of such policies' being enacted. But the political debate is sure to intensify, with consequences that are hard to predict. As Reich says, "One of the big stabilizing powers in American politics, particularly in the postwar era, has been the great middle class," and the political fallout from its decline "could be very divisive in this country." He goes on, "You end up pitting working American against working American, or against the poor, for portions of an ever-decreasing slice of the national pie."

This process is already visible in the rise of anti-immigration, anti-affirmative-action, and anti-incumbency rhetoric. At least one Wall Street observer thinks he has spotted a new populist movement on the horizon: anti-capitalism. Stephen Roach, the chief economist at Morgan Stanley, told his clients in a circular last month that "worker backlash could be one of the key issues of the 1996 presidential campaign." After highlighting the "extraordinary gap between productivity and real wages that has now opened up in the U.S.," Roach warned investors not to bank on a rout of the Democrats in next year's election. "The so-called majority of public opinion in favor of deficit reduction—and its associated dismantlement of *entitlement spending*—is about to be drowned out by a groundswell of worker backlash," he wrote. "Workers want more—not less. New wave Republicanism is starting to feel like a great short."

Roach's prediction is debatable, but at some point both parties will have to level with the voters and tell them the truth: that the postwar Golden Era is gone forever, and the great middle class has gone with it. This is nobody's fault; it is just how capitalism has developed. Once this conclusion is accepted, maybe the political debate can move away from mutual recrimination and on to ways of governing a less homogeneous and more inequitable society. ♦

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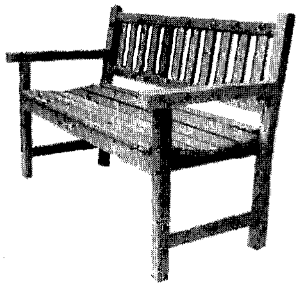

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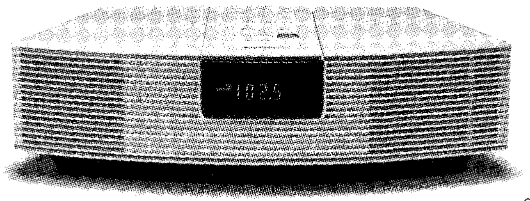

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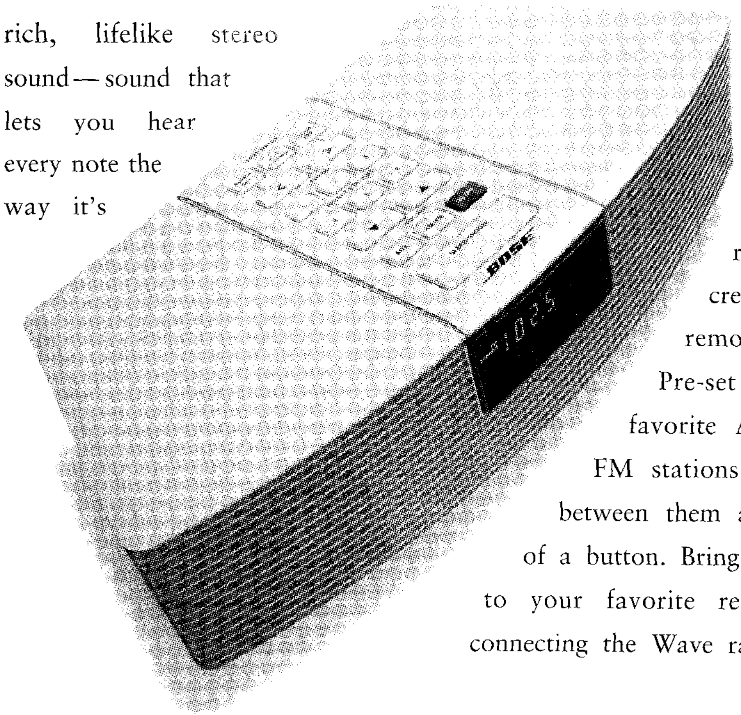

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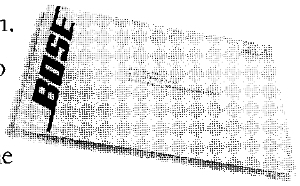

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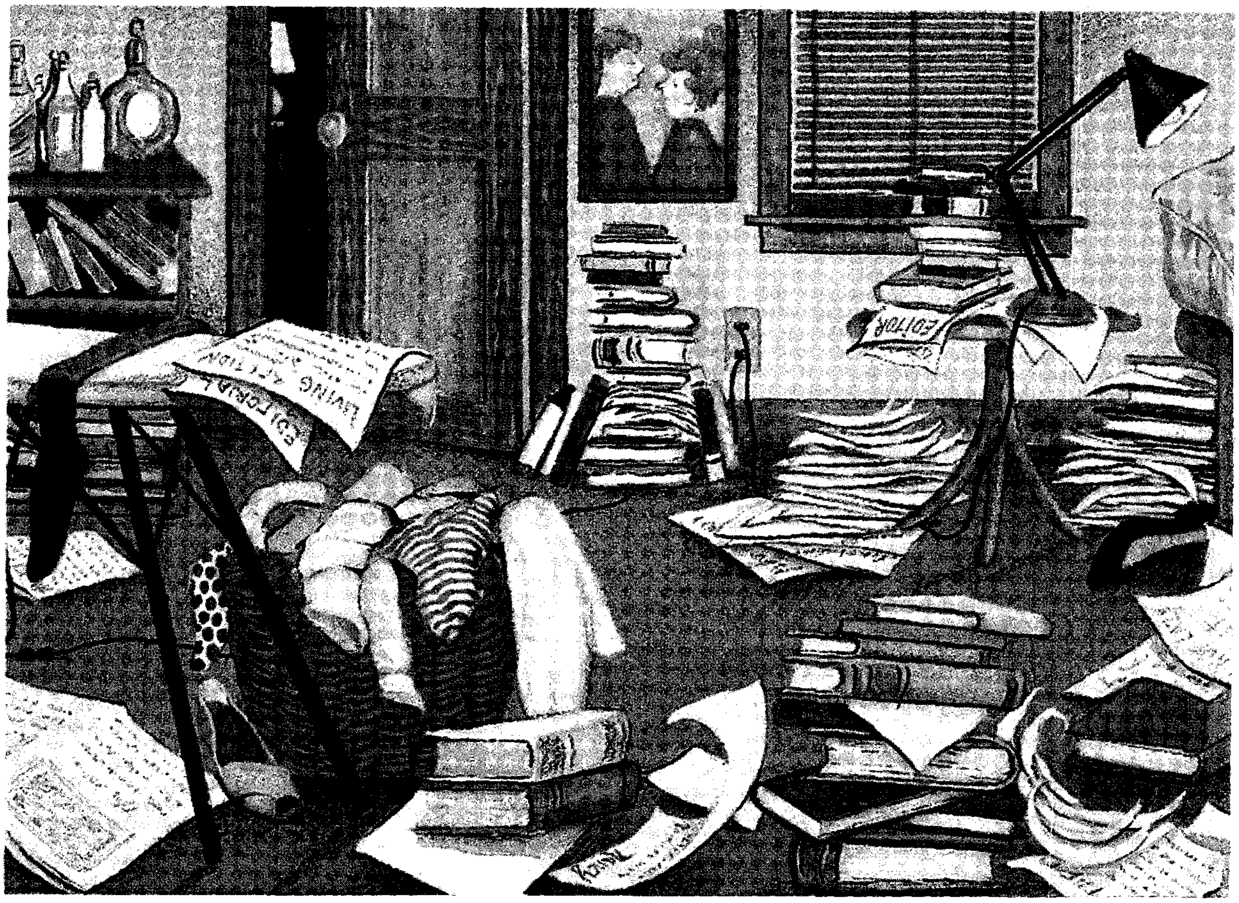


MODERN LIFE

HOW DID I GET HERE?

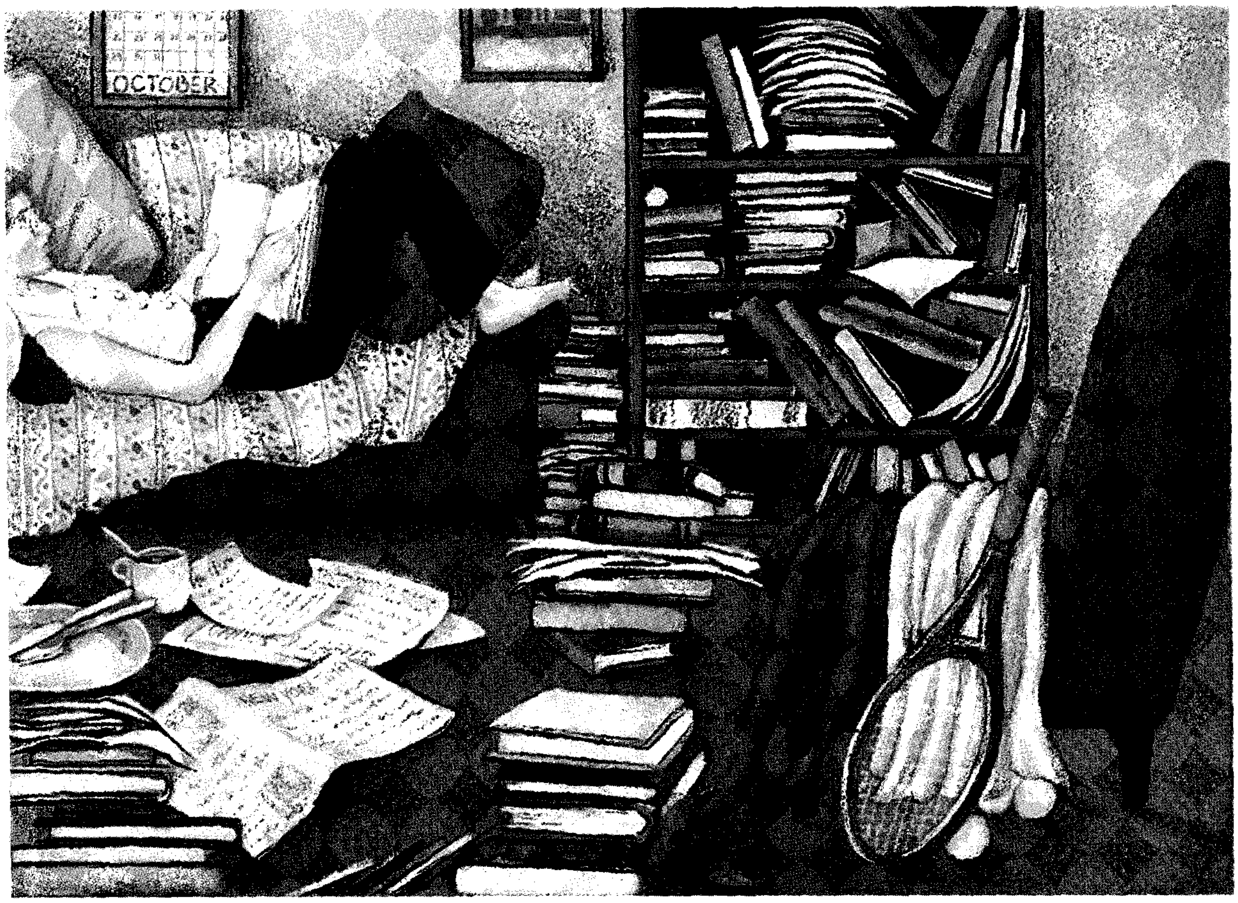
After sixteen years, it came down to a battle of wills: woman versus apartment.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

I NEVER really decided to move to New York, and I never really decided to stay, but I've lived here, in the same apartment, for sixteen years, which is longer than I've lived anywhere else. In that time, my parents and my three brothers have moved twenty-four times. My last move was from my parents' house in Westchester County, ten months after I graduated from college. With a roommate who was a friend of a college friend, I got a two-bedroom apartment on the Upper West Side which rented for four hundred and seventy-five dollars a month; half that amount was about as much as I could afford on my take-home pay, which was a little less than two hundred dollars a week. I was working in the typing pool of this magazine, at a time when career advice to young women included an admonition that if you started out with a job that involved typing all you would ever do was type. But I didn't believe that. I dared to type. Over the years, things between me and my apartment deteriorated to the point where we barely acknowledged each other's existence. I kept waiting for it to change into something that it wasn't, and it kept waiting for me to give it the attention it deserved. By the time this year rolled around, we had both had enough. It was clear that one of us had to go.

For most young people who come to New York, having a roommate is not a matter of choice. I was lucky in that my apartment was well laid out for sharing: the two bedrooms were at opposite ends of the apartment, with the bathroom, kitchen, and living room in between. Nobody had to go through anybody else's space. My room was almost twice as big as the other bedroom—big enough to fit the double bed I'd bought for twenty dollars a few months after I moved in, from someone who was leaving the building, and the twin bed I'd brought from home, which I used for guests until I stopped having guests. There was plenty of space left over for my desk, my stereo, and the bookcase that had been next to my bed at home when I was growing up and that I had spent hours staring at, reabsorbing

PATRICK MILBOURN

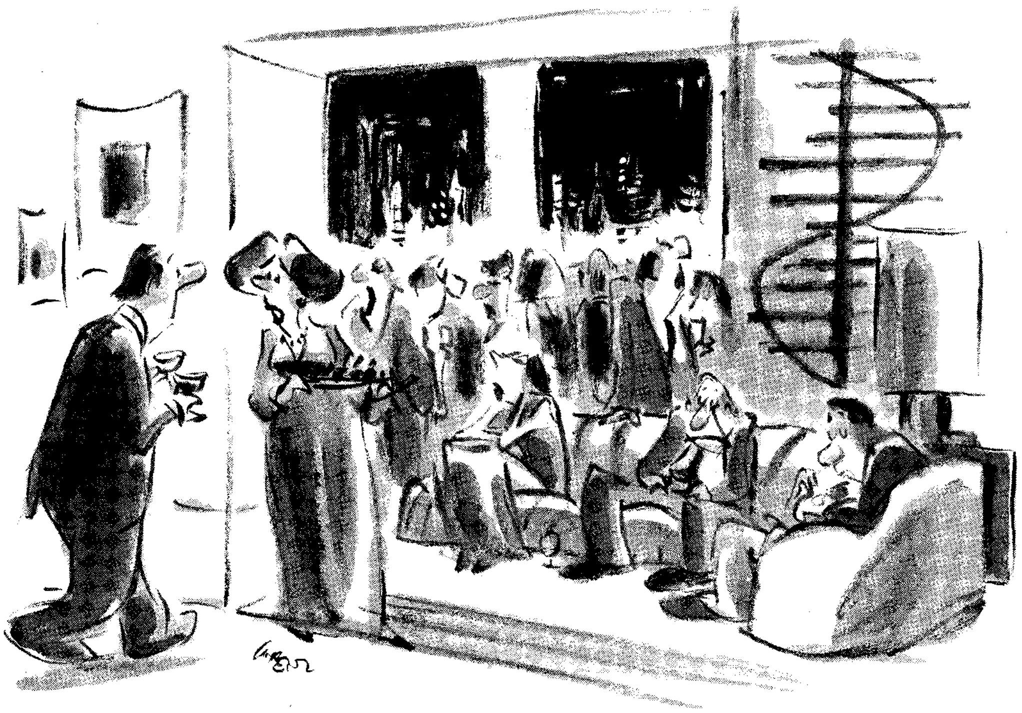


the contents of the books by gazing at their spines.

I don't know how I ended up with the better room, but I'm pretty sure we didn't flip a coin. I think I just took it. My decorating scheme was a big map of Scotland and a framed Manet poster on the walls, a big straw mat on the floor, and matchstick blinds, which are O.K. for daytime but at night are simply useless. I know because the one time I've seen people in the building across the street having sex it was through their matchstick blinds. Since my room was on the fire escape, my father made me buy a metal gate for the window. The gate made my room look like a prison and cut down on the little light my window lets in (my apartment faces north, and I get a wee shaft of direct sunlight in my bedroom between seven-thirty and eight in the morning for about a month during the early summer), but I was glad I had it a few years ago, when, one fall night at about 3 A.M., a guy who was the boyfriend of someone who lived next door at the time tried to climb in my window, thinking it was his girlfriend's. I stood in the dark in my nightgown a few feet away from him, safe behind the gate, and delivered a somewhat louder and more detailed assessment of him than was strictly necessary.

I MAY not have ever loved my apartment, but I've always loved my address: Riverside Drive. It sounds great. My building has an even number, so my address has a round, satisfying sound, and I like the way it calls up a long-ago kind of bourgeois prosperity and comfort, and connects me to the life of the river. I used to love to say it out loud. When people asked me where I lived, I would practically bellow my address, as if I were telling them they had just won the grand prize on "Truth or Consequences." My building went up in 1904 and consisted of nine- and ten-room apartments, all of which have since gone under the knife at least once. Elegance inside and out was standard then on Riverside Drive, but there are no clues now to whether my building met that standard on the inside. (The exterior is unremarkable to the point of unnoticeability, like a bicycle that works but that nobody would ever think of stealing.) The only room that has survived intact from the apartment that mine was part of is the bathroom, and the only vestige of its originalness is a row of tiles in a pink-and-blue floral pattern which runs around the room at armpit level. Tenants of yore painted the bathroom pink and then blue, and though there are now many layers of white paint covering the walls, a chip with a colorful underside still occasionally falls, providing the only evidence that anyone else ever lived here.

During my first few years in the apartment, I did everything the way my mother did. (She herself had lived on Riverside Drive for a couple of years in the forties; *her* entry-level job in publishing, which was also her exit-level job, since she quit to get married, was at *Life.*) I used the same household products, baked chicken the way she did, got charge cards at all the same department stores. Altman's card was the hardest to get: I had to go to the credit department in person and get checked out, because my income didn't quite cut it, and only because my mother was an old customer did the woman there decide to give me a card. I had a London Fog trenchcoat, a



"Oh, Lord! We forgot to invite any content providers."

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junior version of my mother's Burberry—something I now associate with sad commuters with comb-overs and clunky briefcases. When I rode up in my elevator alone at night after work, wearing the trenchcoat and carrying my book bag, I always became flooded by a melancholy vanity, as if I were being watched through a hidden camera. "Here is a young woman living in New York. It's the end of the day, and she's going home to her apartment." To me, my self-conscious weariness was cinematic and fascinating. It made me feel like an adult. Now I mostly get that feeling when I'm going home in a taxi late at night, but I don't know whether the feeling is still really mine or whether I ripped it off from "My Dinner with André."

After a few years, I thought from time to time about moving, and for the past five or six I thought about it constantly. But I had a sense of pride about my stability, and believed that if I stayed in the same apartment long enough the time I'd spent there would acquire weight and meaning. I would have a history, and I would be able to look back on it and see *that it all made sense.* I would stand out in people's address books among all the other addresses that had been crossed out or erased. *My friends and family* would know my phone number the way they knew their own birthdays. In the meantime, I was waiting for something to happen—for something or someone to come along and give me the signal that my adult life had officially begun.

For the last twelve years, for about four thousand days and nights, I have had the apartment to myself. My first roommate moved to the East Side after two years; my next, and final, roommate was a friend from work who after two years moved to Texas. I put the twin bed in the other bedroom, and I would tell people who asked what I did with the extra room that I slept there when I was having a fight with myself.

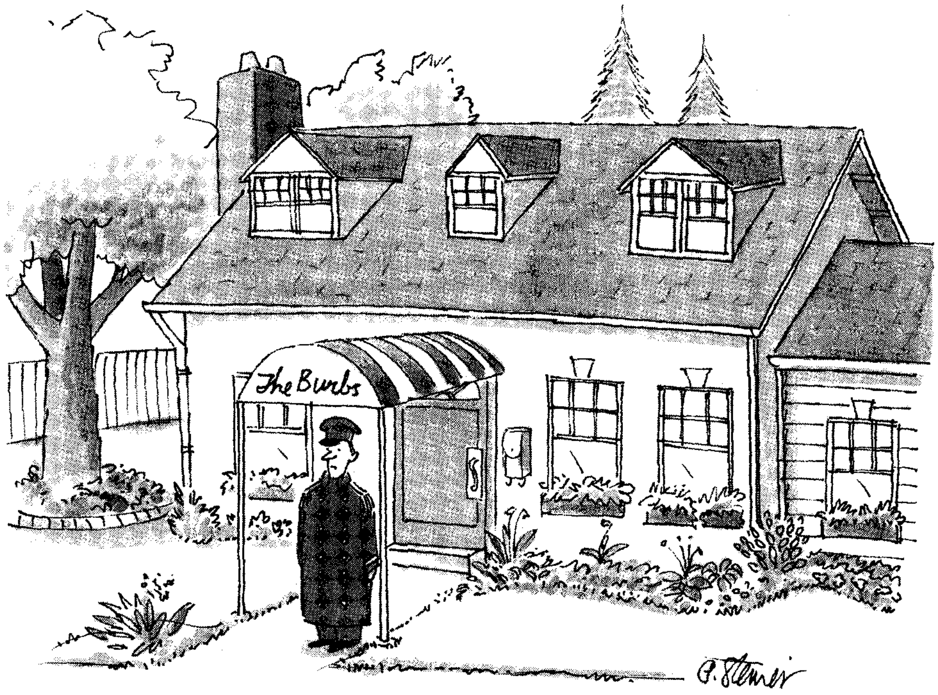
Gradually, I became obsessed with the idea of spatial integrity. Old Upper East Side and Upper West Side apartments usually have it; parlor-floor apartments in brownstones never do. The test for it is physiological as well as visual: if your body relaxes when you walk into an apartment, if you're drawn in by a sense that a human being *with a heart* created it, it has spatial integrity. I began to notice—and to be unable not to notice—that my apartment was a *misbegotten* shell of a space, and I took it personally. It's impossible to figure out what the layout and the dimensions of the original apartment were, even though I have been in two of the other apartments that are its offspring, but I started *to fantasize* about what no longer existed. The ghost pains I felt about what was missing made me *acutely* aware of the *inadequacy* of what I had. (Memo to studio dwellers: yes, it *is* unseemly to complain about having a two-bedroom apartment.) Aside from the bathroom, which is the best room in the apartment, nothing feels right. My bedroom is unnecessarily big, and the other one is too small. There is no hall closet; in fact, there is no hall. There is no counter space in the kitchen; there are no counters, or drawers. The kitchen is a squared-U shape, like a staple, and is about the same size. The closets jut into the bedrooms like clumsy afterthoughts. The closets themselves are all right, though—they are the second- and third-nicest rooms in the apartment.

I dream about my apartment all the time, the same two dreams over and over. One is a bad dream: I wake up and realize that I have no front door, or that the door doesn't lock, or that the door is a Dutch door, and the top part doesn't lock, so anyone can get in. Nothing terrible actually happens to me, but I have the terrible awareness that I've never been safe, that I've ignored threats and warnings, that I haven't lived right. The other dream is, on the surface, a good one: I find a door at the far end of the second bedroom which I've never noticed, and when I open it I find several more rooms. (There's always a room with a washer and dryer, which for someone who shares five washers and four dryers with a hundred people is the height of erotic wish *fulfillment.*) More space, if I'd only known to open the door; but, then, I didn't know the door was there.

Lately, I've begun to dream that the people who live next door are my roommates, which in a way they are. Many people have passed through the apartment next to me, and I know a little something about all of them, even the ones I never met, because hand in hand with my apartment's lack of spatial integrity is its lack of structural integrity. The wall that separates my living room and bedroom from my next-door neighbors' apartment is so thin that it's more of a membrane than a wall—an imperfect, porous barrier, through which sound and bad vibes pass freely. The trend next door has been from older to younger, from couples to transient groups of single people, from bohemian to corporate, from people who make their own music to people with powerful stereos. My first neighbors were a couple with a baby, whose teething cries used to wake me up at night. I didn't mind that; it made me feel that, if the day ever came when I had children myself, my maternal instincts would be ready to roll. But I did mind hearing the husband's cello and, every Tuesday night, the string quartet that gathered there for several hours and played in the living room, directly behind my bedroom. (The living room has since been sliced in two; now there's a small bedroom behind mine, with a very different sonic menu.) One night, I came home from work at about ten o'clock—I was by then a stressed-out fact checker—and when I heard the music coming through the wall I lost it. I thought, I'll see your string quartet and raise you a Bruce Springsteen. I put on "Darkness on the Edge of Town," which was the most thunderous of all my albums, and turned the volume and the bass way up. Within a couple of minutes, the cellist was banging on my door—a metal door, whose position in the doorframe he altered slightly but permanently, despite his having no visible muscles—and yelled at me to open up, which I refused to do. "What do you want?" I yelled back, as if I didn't know. He ordered me to turn my stereo down. I told him that I didn't want to hear his music, either. I then did turn my stereo down, the quartet stopped playing for the night, and that was that. My dislike of these people continued until they moved, a couple of years later, because I knew that they knew I had behaved badly. I remember this incident with great shame but no regret: I like to think that, having snapped once, I now have antibodies against snapping and won't snap again, and so far I haven't.

Just as almost everyone in New York has a crime story, almost everyone has a noise story—about loud noises, noises at weird hours (not that any hour in New York is really weirder than any other), noises of unknown origin, noises that won't stop. Someone could put together a fat volume just about car-alarm stories, and I could contribute an appendix about the Hitchcockian, psychotic-clown bells of the Mister Softee truck that goes down my street twice a day every day from April through November, about the clacking-ball toys that the kids on my street never tired of playing with a few summers ago, and about the weekly sleep-shattering visitations of the recycling truck. I vividly remember the first time a Chinese take-out menu was shoved under my door, maybe ten years ago. I was lying on the couch in the living room watching television one evening, and I heard a rustling sound. My body reacted before my mind did; the hair on my arms stood up, and I bolted off the couch, thinking that there was a mouse in the house. Then there are the sounds of TV football that squeeze up into my bathroom through the space around a pipe; the woman across the street who once put a typewriter on her windowsill and started banging away in the middle of the night; and the honking pet bird whose owner eluded me for several years. I remember the bird mainly because of the response I got from a policeman when I called my precinct house and said I was hearing what I thought might be cries of distress: "Tell your husband to go over there with a gun."

When I say that I've always hated my next-door neighbors and that they've ruined my life, I mean it as a tribute—an acknowledgment that my outsized feelings about the noise that comes through the wall have more to do with me than with any unneighborly activity on their part. But when you live alone and yet don't have the one advantage that's supposed to come with the territory—real, true privacy—you end up not so much living alone as feeling alone. Wherever I am in the apartment, I can hear the neighbors come and go, so I'm always aware of their presence. And the fact that they almost always slam the door (young people today), which startles me and makes the pictures on my living-room wall shake, means to me that they are indifferent to my presence. So I'm stuck with irritatingly contradictory feelings that thrive by feeding on each other—the feeling that I've been invaded and the feeling that I don't exist. If I'm reading in bed and someone next door closes any door in that apartment, the wall behind my head gives a little shudder, and when someone walks down the long hallway next to the wall my floor creaks. I can hear sneezes, the ringing of a telephone, light switches being flipped, the clatter of pots and pans. I hear voices all the time, though only once have I been able to catch a complete sentence: "Oh, my God, I forgot to iron a blouse for tomorrow!" When I'm out walking around the city, I'm alert but not edgy; at home, though, I have to maintain a



semi-tense state of readiness for the shock of unexpected sounds from next door. Except when I'm sleeping, I exist in two modes at home: either I'm about to be startled or I've just been startled. There was one sound from next door that I liked, but I don't hear it anymore, because the perpetrator is gone, and I sort of miss it—a cat padding down the hallway.

Of course, I have had my moments. I am not exactly a day at the beach. I'm more like a night on Bald Mountain. I wouldn't have wanted to live next door to me during, say, my Judy Garland phase, which lasted for about three years. I was going through a long stretch of emotional numbness, and treated it by self-medicating with large volumes—and high volumes—of Judy Garland. The album of her Carnegie Hall concert was particularly effective, since it's live, and Garland, who normally emotes enough for two, practically smothers the frenzied audience with feeling. For quite a while, I couldn't leave home in the morning without the energy boost provided by listening to "Swanee" about eight times. I can't listen to Garland anymore. The emotional overkill is too much, all wrong for my life now. Just looking at the CDs, and remembering how I almost drowned in them, makes me wince. But my immersion in Judyism served its purpose, and I would have liked to be able to go through it without having to worry whether my neighbors, who could surely hear every note (there is no wall that can stop Judy Garland), thought I was out of my mind.

WYETH'S TOWER

In 1979, Betsy Wyeth bought Southern Island, off the coast of Maine, as a surprise gift for her husband, Andrew; the artist knew the island from childhood trips there with his father, N. C. Wyeth. The island, where Andrew and Betsy's son Jamie now lives and works, has a lighthouse and an adjacent A-shaped bell tower (pictured here), which Betsy had decorated like Admiral Nelson's cabin, and which occasionally served as a studio. Bruce Weber visited the island in 1983. He says, "Andrew was hopping around as if he were a kid who was as amazed as when he first learned to draw."

Photograph by Bruce Weber

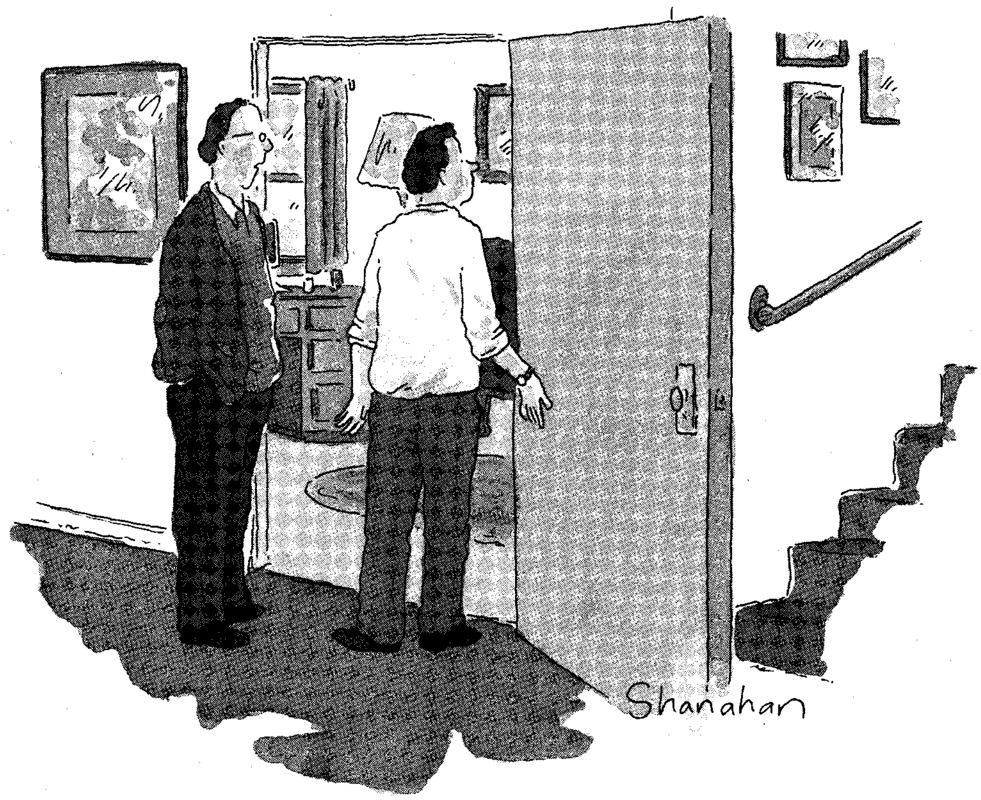
BEGINNING in the early eighties, so many new buildings went up on Broadway between Eighty-sixth Street and Ninety-sixth Street that for several years you couldn't go more than two blocks at a time without having to walk under three blocks of scaffolding. The physical growth on Broadway stopped in the mid-eighties, and it took several years for the mercantile growth to catch up. Other areas of the Upper West Side have gone through several incarnations as well. Columbus Avenue boomed, then became dead; now there are once again young people out at night all over Columbus and on Amsterdam, which until a few years ago was simply a speedway for taxis and trucks. Your favorite restaurant probably wasn't here five years ago, and it probably won't be here five years from now. You get to the point where it would be foolish to be surprised at anything. A sports bar opens. Then it closes. Whatever. A movie theatre undergoes fission and becomes a magnet. Another movie theatre opens twenty blocks south of it, and suddenly the first one becomes passé, a dumping ground for action movies and duds. The only stores that never go out of business are the Korean markets.

My own list of local—that is, anything that's a five-minute walk from home—losses includes Marty Reisman's Ping-Pong Parlor, which became a Red Apple supermarket and then a Sloan's; the New Yorker theatre and the New Yorker bookshop, which were buried by a high-rise (the Savannah); Pomander Walk (lost in the sense that its gates are now kept locked); the Shopwell on Ninetieth Street, which is now a more upscale Food Emporium (good for things like smoked mussels and capers and not so good for things like, say, toilet paper); and the dingy old Thalia, with its perverse sight lines, where I saw "Grand Illusion" and "Rules of the Game" for the first time, and whose schedules I diligently taped to my refrigerator (it was the law if you lived on the Upper West Side) long after I stopped actually going there.

Upper West Siders can pinpoint each other's ages by these changes. Anyone who moved here just a few years before I did can remember when the New Yorker was a single-screen theatre, and when Marty Reisman's was on the other side of Ninety-sixth Street, where the Columbia is now. The vicissitudes of law enforcement have also affected the complexion of the neighborhood. In the mid-eighties, crack users trickled over from Broadway and colonized the dark doorways on the side streets; they're all gone now. And so are the prostitutes who for years hung out on the corners in the high Eighties. Yet, for all the changes, the business end of my neighborhood feels exactly the same as it did sixteen years ago. (For one thing, most people on the street dress as though they were doing their laundry.) That's what I like about it, except when that's what I hate about it. The Nineties on Broadway have no particular identity, and no particular ambition; it's the only part of the Upper West Side where a Twin Donut could close and then reopen as a Twin Donut.

MY place was a lot like my neighborhood: the more it changed, the more it stayed the same. When the crummy couch that a friend had given me (she was already its third owner) got even crummier, I covered it with a nice Indian cloth. When that got crummy, I did nothing. For a long time, the amount of space I had and my frequent-enough attacks of fastidiousness (it's 2 A.M., time to clean the bathroom; can't go another minute without putting those photographs in an album) masked the fact that I had no plan for the apartment, no design for living, no idea about what I wanted my home to be like. Eventually, after I'd spent several years living alone, the thick coats of discipline that my parents had applied to me began to peel off in large chunks, revealing a psychic infrastructure with progressive mettle fatigue. Does it really matter if I make the bed? Mmm, let me think. . . . No. I used to be incapable of leaving dishes in the sink overnight, but I gradually loosened up to the point where I could ignore them for days. So what? I'll get to them. Is there any reason I should pick up that Lord & Taylor flyer announcing a sale that ended three months ago off the floor and throw it away? Name one. And if I'm done with the ironing board, wouldn't it be a good idea to put it away, so I don't have to do a subway-turnstile hip swivel every time I walk by it? I guess.

I didn't think of this as any kind of rebellion; I knew it was slippage. I stood outside it, watched it happen, was a little



"Someday I'd like to make this into my private study, but right now it's my wife's private study."

• •

bit in awe of the creeping chaos. I could hear my father's maxims being broadcast over my private public-address system: "If you put something where it belongs, you'll always be able to find it"; "If you want something done right, do it yourself"; "If you've got a problem, fix it." The principle of accountability had seeped in and set firm. My sense of responsibility (and culpability) made it hard for me to help myself and even harder for me to ask for help. I was ground down by the oppressive ideals of self-sufficiency: it—whatever "it" was—didn't count unless I did it myself, and if I didn't do it myself it didn't get done. I suppose this idea makes some people bound out of bed in the morning, but I am not the wouldn't-it-be-fun-to-go-swimming-in-Long-Island-Sound-at-the-crack-of-dawn-in-the-middle-of-winter-like-Katharine-Hepburn type. Domestically speaking, I found it easier and easier to roll over and play dead. My life wasn't adding up; it was just piling up. It was like the headline of a story about Bette Davis that I'd clipped from the *Star* and sent as a joke to a friend in California, which said, "SHE'S LIVING ON COFFEE AND CIGARETTES AND IS 'TIRED OF EVERYTHING.' "

Part of the problem is that I like stuff. Except for plastic souvenir pens, which I have a huge collection of, I don't deliberately collect anything, but I automatically accumulate everything. (In duplicate, if possible. I have only one piano and one fiddle, but I do have two harmonicas and two banjos.) I'm especially drawn to things that nobody wants anymore. When I get off the elevator on my floor, or while I'm waiting for the elevator, I always look at the stuff that people have thrown out. Among the magazines and hangers and broken appliances and old clothes (all clothes that get thrown away seem to be orange) have been some eyebrow-raisers—two of the dirtiest dirty magazines I have ever seen; the manuscript of an unpublished and unpublishable autobiographical novel written by someone on my floor—and some keepers. I didn't have a fez. Now I do. I also have a set of three-pound dumbbells. Once, I came upon a big clear plastic bag filled with more than a dozen soccer trophies. Stuff at its finest. I took a few of them home, thinking they might come in handy someday. Incredibly, they didn't, and late one night I carried them down to another floor, so the person who had thrown them away wouldn't see them back on the garbage pile two years after she got rid of them. I also pick up any college alumni magazine I happen to see, even if I don't know anyone who went to that college. Yale is a good one, not just because of the rah-rah, old-boy nicknames—Inky, Bunky, Chili, Sport, and Tiger all make an appearance in the class notes of the latest issue—but because it provides me with precious information about a certain shrink I know. Recent revelations are that she attended her twentieth reunion (travel and hotel accommodations paid for by Nancy Franklin, Smith '78) and that Joyce Maynard was in her class—the same Joyce Maynard whose journalistic career I have been a rapt spectator of for more than twenty years, beginning with her famous 1972 *Times Magazine* article about Her Generation (you wanted to smack the title: "An 18-Year-Old Looks Back on Life") and continuing at least to an article in *Self* two years ago about why she'd decided, at the age of thirty-six, to get breast implants. ("My journey into the land of large breasts" was how she put it.) I have a lot of stuff like this in my head, just as I have a lot of stuff in my apartment. In fact, by the time I was about thirty, the inside of my head and the inside of my apartment had become a lot alike—a mess I didn't know how to clean up. But the thought of getting rid of stuff was unthinkable: my stuff was how I knew myself, it was who I was, and how would anyone else know who I was in the absence of my stuff? My stuff was my hedge against anxiety—never mind that it was, even more, a source of anxiety, as the inhabitable space in my apartment grew smaller and smaller. I was relieved that a boyfriend I had a couple of years ago was not bothered by the disorder my stuff created, but I found his lack of interest in my stuff disturbing—it meant he would never really understand me. I was missing the point. It was me that he was interested in, and I finally saw that I was more than the sum of my stuff. For the first time, I had the feeling that there was a way out.

Of course, the way out was literally out—out of the apartment, out of the building. This year, after fending off most people from seeing how I lived ("No one's allowed in my apartment," I would say, as if I were warning them away from an abandoned mine shaft), I asked a friend from work whom I've known for ten years but who had never been here to come over and help me—to perform, in effect, an intervention. I made her promise that she would still like me when she saw the piles of multimedia clutter—records, CDs, books, magazines, old mail, videotapes, newspaper clippings—and then I gave her free rein. At the end of five hours, we had filled fourteen garbage bags with clothes to go to the Salvation Army and eight bags with stuff to go on the garbage pile by the elevator. We had a few disagreements. When she pulled my lab coat from college out of the closet and said "Why would you keep this? Are you going to wear it?" I said "Why wouldn't I keep it?" Her stare of incomprehension was too powerful for me; I threw it out. We also clashed over a three-year-old issue of *New York* that I was keeping under the couch in case I ever needed to refer to the cover story, which was "Getting Fired: How to Survive." After a brief tug-of-war, her world view prevailed, and out it went. Into the garbage went outdated travel brochures from Norway, British Columbia, the Shetland Islands, Ireland, Montana, South Dakota, and Cape May. Eight shopping bags filled with other shopping bags—out. Clothes I knew I would never wear again and clothes my friend urged me never to wear again—out. I was allowed to keep a few mementos of my old self—two Laura Ashley dresses ("Maybe I'll make pillows or something out of them," I lied), and my Frye boots from 1979. Four of my five pairs of flip-flops—out. More than a dozen pairs of shoes, some of which were ugly, some of which were worn out, some of which had shrunk a size in the closet and were too small—out. A few weeks later, my friend came back and we picked up where we had left off. We didn't finish (I'll have to decide on my own what to do with my mother's Burberry, which she gave me a few years ago, and which is too small for me), but we'd made a big dent. For the first time in years, my apartment was livable—and, even more important, leavable.

I HAVEN'T moved yet, but I've bought an apartment, and I already miss my life here. Now, whenever I go home in a taxi I ask the driver to turn onto Riverside Drive instead of going up one of the other avenues, since I have a finite number of these trips left. I've made good friends in my building: people I actually hang out with, watch "Melrose Place" with, go to Happy Burger with, talk about the other tenants with. People I've trusted with my keys, people whose cats I've fed, people who have given me some of the peanut-butter cookies they just baked. People I can call from the Minneapolis airport and ask to turn on my air-conditioner, so the apartment will be cool when I get home. And then there are the people I hardly know but share a comfortable, long-term esprit d'élevator with. I'm staying on the Upper West Side, but I'm moving inland, and I'll miss the seasons here at the edge of the city—the acorny smell of fall, especially. I'll miss seeing the river every day when I leave my building, and when I lean out my kitchen window and look west. Wherever you go, there you are, they say, but when I move I'm hoping to give the slip to whatever it was in me that didn't get the oven fixed for two years; kept paying the cable bill but didn't call the cable company for two and a half years to come fix the problem that kept me from getting most of the channels I was supposed to get; didn't have the drip in the bathtub fixed; didn't have the ceiling repainted when a radiator above me sprang a leak six years ago; didn't get a new couch, because I didn't know how long I'd be staying here.

I don't know what it was, exactly, that enabled me to break up with my apartment. But I suppose I knew about a year and a half ago that I was preparing my exit. I forgot to renew my lease—the real-estate equivalent of not showing up at my own wedding—and found an eviction notice taped to my door one morning. I straightened things out, but in my mind it was the beginning of the end. Economics also had something to do with it. Unlike most of the buildings on Riverside Drive, my building never went co-op, so I never had the springboard of an insider's price to give me a foothold on the lower rungs of the ladder of ownership, even though I'd been saving money since I was in second grade, in my elementary school's banking program. Instead, I settled into domestic unhappiness, renewable every two years, in exchange for a rent that was too good to give up. If I couldn't get on the ladder, I could at least stay on the merry-go-round. Finally, though, I was able to dislodge the idea that buying a place—committing myself to a decision—equalled disaster, and that spending my savings would inevitably make me a bag lady down the road. (I also came to the more profound conclusion that not spending my savings would not necessarily prevent me from becoming a bag lady; in any case, I already was a bag lady—a bag lady with a two-bedroom, rent-stabilized apartment.)

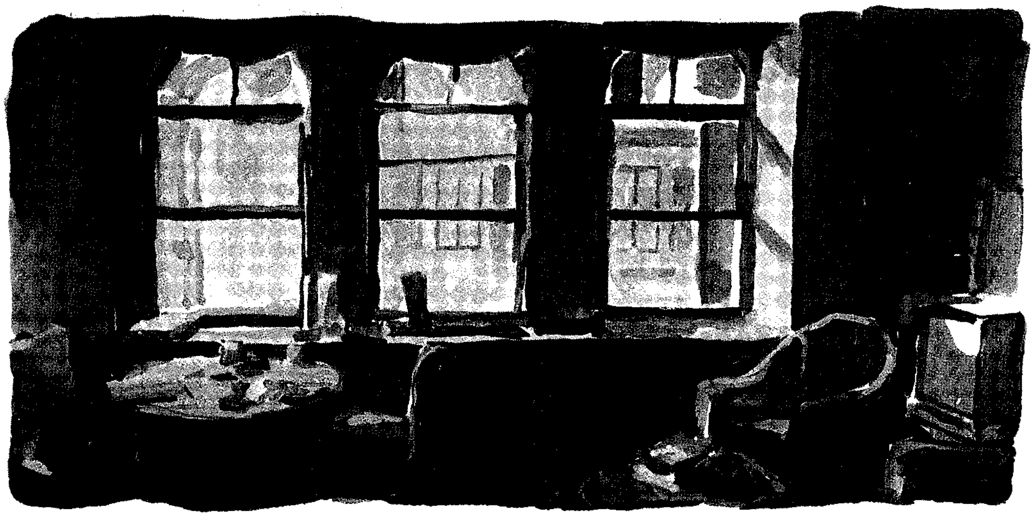
Age has something to do with it, too. The worst year of my thirties was not the year after I turned thirty but the year after I turned thirty-one; until then, I had believed that once I touched thirty I'd get to turn around and do my twenties again, with a clean slate that this time I would mess up in the right ways. It was a shock to discover that the mistakes I hadn't made would now never be made but would exist as negative shapes, cast in a kind of lost-wax process. At this point, I took half a year off from my job—I was by now a stressed-out editor—and from New York, not to find myself but, I hoped, to lose myself. (It turns out that running away from your problems sometimes does work.) I'd always known how lucky I was, always been told how lucky I was, but when I came back to the city I *felt* lucky for the first time. Still, it took me most of my thirties to adjust to being in my thirties, to come to terms with the knowledge that the inability to make decisions had had a decisive effect on my life, that time is unidirectional, and that I wouldn't be getting extra credit for refusing to live in the present. This is the year before the year I will turn forty, and now the idea that if I don't do something it won't get done mostly acts as a propellant instead of inducing paralysis. The great, unexpected realization I've made during the last few months has been that by deciding to stay in New York I am now also free to go. ♦

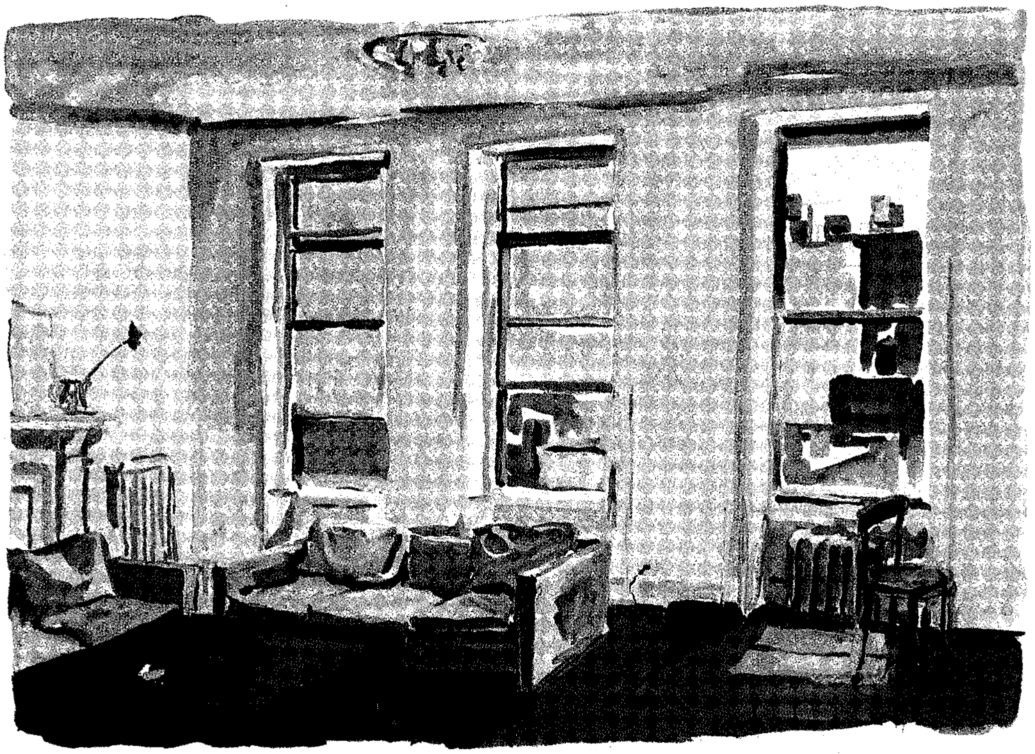
SKETCHBOOK • BY JEAN-PHILIPPE DELHOMME

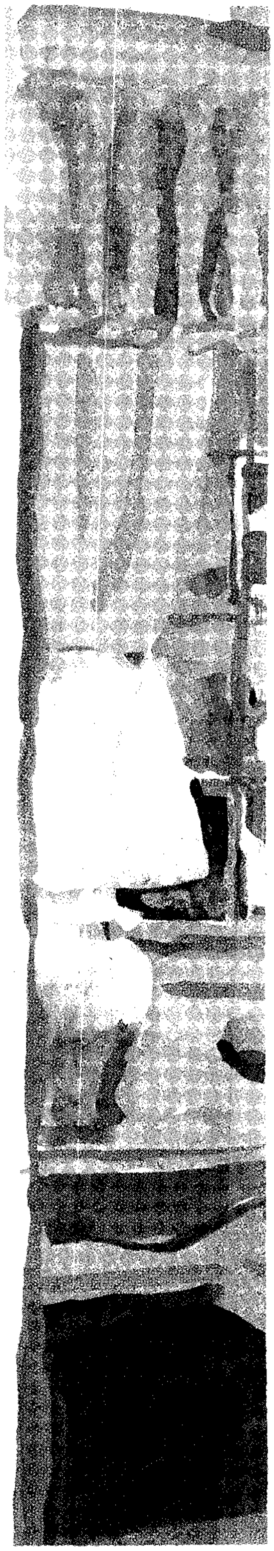
ROOM SERVICE

HOTELS are glorious way stations for the journeying soul, their rooms dreamscapes on which the inveterate traveller projects his need for unmitigated attention. I have never lived in a hotel for more than a week at a time, but I think of myself as a traveller—one who's never happier than when contemplating where he will be tomorrow, away from friends that frustrate, commitments of any sort. A feeling familiar to most travellers fond of hotel dwelling is this: hotels open the door to a larger world of anonymity, where one's character is defined not by what one has achieved in the world outside but, rather, by the courtesy one extends to the staff during one's stay.

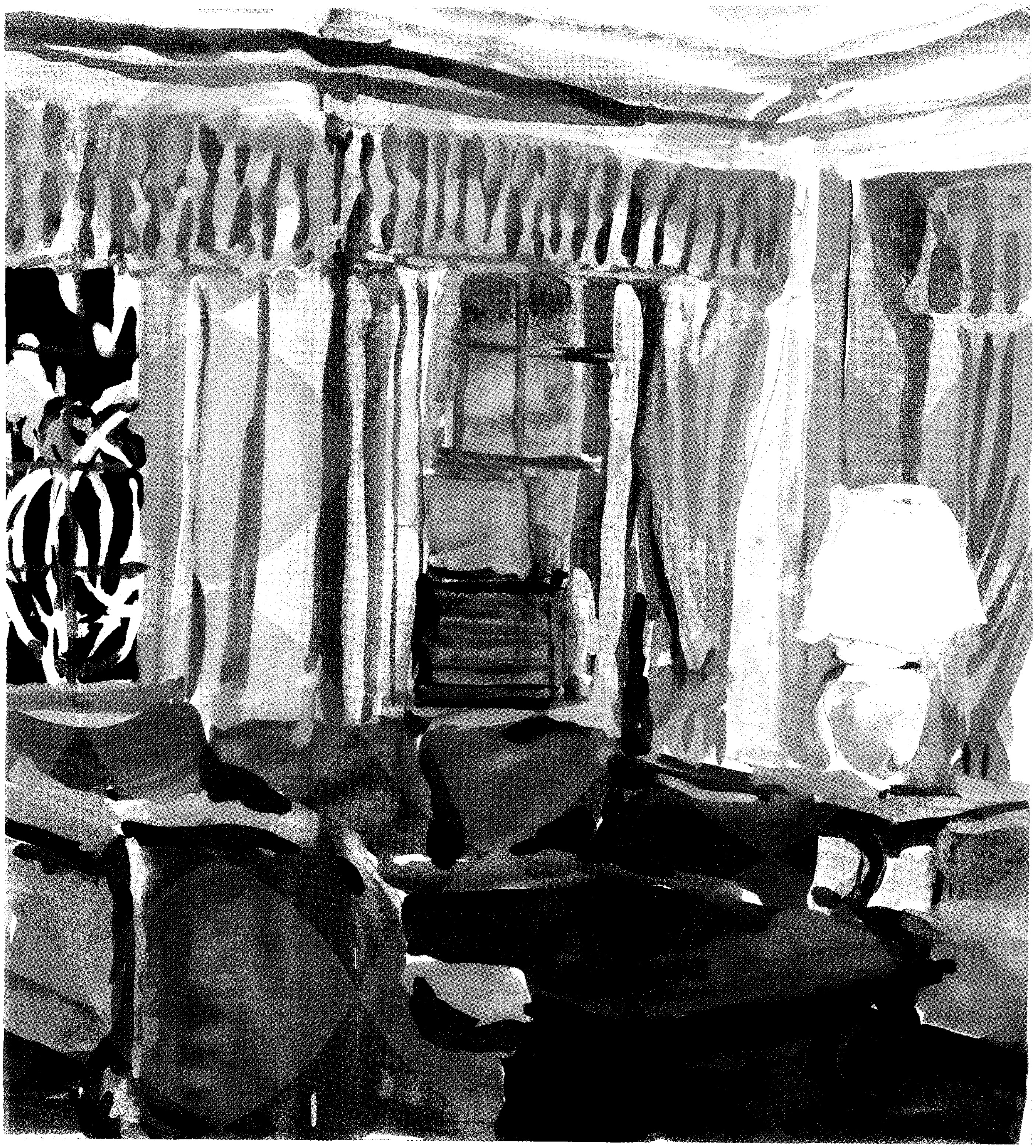
That courtesy (tipping well, not stealing the bath towels) is essential, because, after becoming ensconced in







Views of rooms (clockwise from left): the Hotel Chelsea and Morgans in New York, the Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles.



this or that de-luxe suite or mediocre single, no matter how briefly, one takes on the notorious caprice of the "hotel guest." Away from the routine of home, the hotel guest engages in whim: ordering room-service food that fattens, demanding newspapers that remain unread, traversing one's room nude—luxury. And it falls to the staff to monitor and soothe the traveller's shifting emotions.

Although hotels are generally overrun by harried executives, they are ideally defined by artists and writers, those dealers in the transitory who are most at home in an atmosphere of the fly-by-night. Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Paul and Jane Bowles—hotel dwellers all. And in the world where art, fashion, and money currently converge, hotel living is once again fashionable, particularly in the revivified old beauties (the Beverly Hills Hotel and almost anything in regentrified cities like Miami). The theme varies, but hotels never diverge much from the principle that what guests ultimately want is a room of their own, where they can count their blessings.—HILTON ALS

PROFILE

THE GARDEN ARTIST

What is behind our current obsession with the garden? It has to do with how we understand nature, and no one understands that better than Dan Kiley, who over the past fifty years has become America's premier landscape architect, and who is now beginning work on what may be his Vaux-le-Vicomte—at the estate of Edgar Bronfman, Jr.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

Like many people who become preëminent in their field, Dan Kiley is at odds with some of his illustrious precursors. He bristles, for example, at the very mention of Lancelot (Capability) Brown, the man who revolutionized landscape architecture in the eighteenth century by creating the "natural" English garden. "That bastard single-handedly ruined more of the beautiful classic landscapes of England than anyone," Kiley said recently. "He wanted to make everything look like nature, but he was *copying* nature, and, once you copy anything, it's secondhand, ersatz, fake." Capability Brown had a poor understanding of nature and of man's relationship to it, according to Kiley, because he saw man and nature as separate entities—a mistake that Kiley, the leading American landscape architect of this era, has flailed away at throughout a long professional career. "It's not man *and* nature," he will tell you. "It's not even man *with* nature. Man *is* nature, just like the trees."

Bouncing happily in the front seat of an open golf cart, his head shielded from the July sun by a rakishly tattered straw hat, Daniel Urban Kiley doesn't look like the nature guru that those words might suggest. He looks more like a boulevardier (his favorite self-image)—pink cheeks, white hair down to his collar, alert blue eyes taking everything in. At the moment, he is brimming over with ideas about how he might alter, redesign, and unify the landscape that he is seeing for the first time today—a magnificent three-hundred-and-fifty-seven-acre private estate in Dutchess County, New York. He has been asked to look at it by its current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Bronfman, Jr., who also want Kiley to design three gardens for the town house they are renovating, on the Upper East Side. The Bronfmans met Kiley through Peter Rose, the architect of their town house. Rose took Clarissa Bronfman to see an exhibition of Kiley's work last spring at the American Academy of Arts and Letters—the Academy was honoring Kiley with its Brunner Prize in Architecture, which had never before been given to a landscape architect—and Kiley and the effervescent, alarmingly beautiful Mrs. Bronfman hit it off right away. Kiley asked her if she did sports, and it turned out that she had been on the Venezuelan national track-and-field team not many years ago. Kiley subsequently met Edgar Bronfman, Jr., who is the president and chief executive officer of the Seagram Company, and who, through Seagram's recent acquisition of MCA, has become a major player in the entertainment industry. They hit it off, too, and as a result Kiley was about to become a major player in the Bronfmans' domestic life.

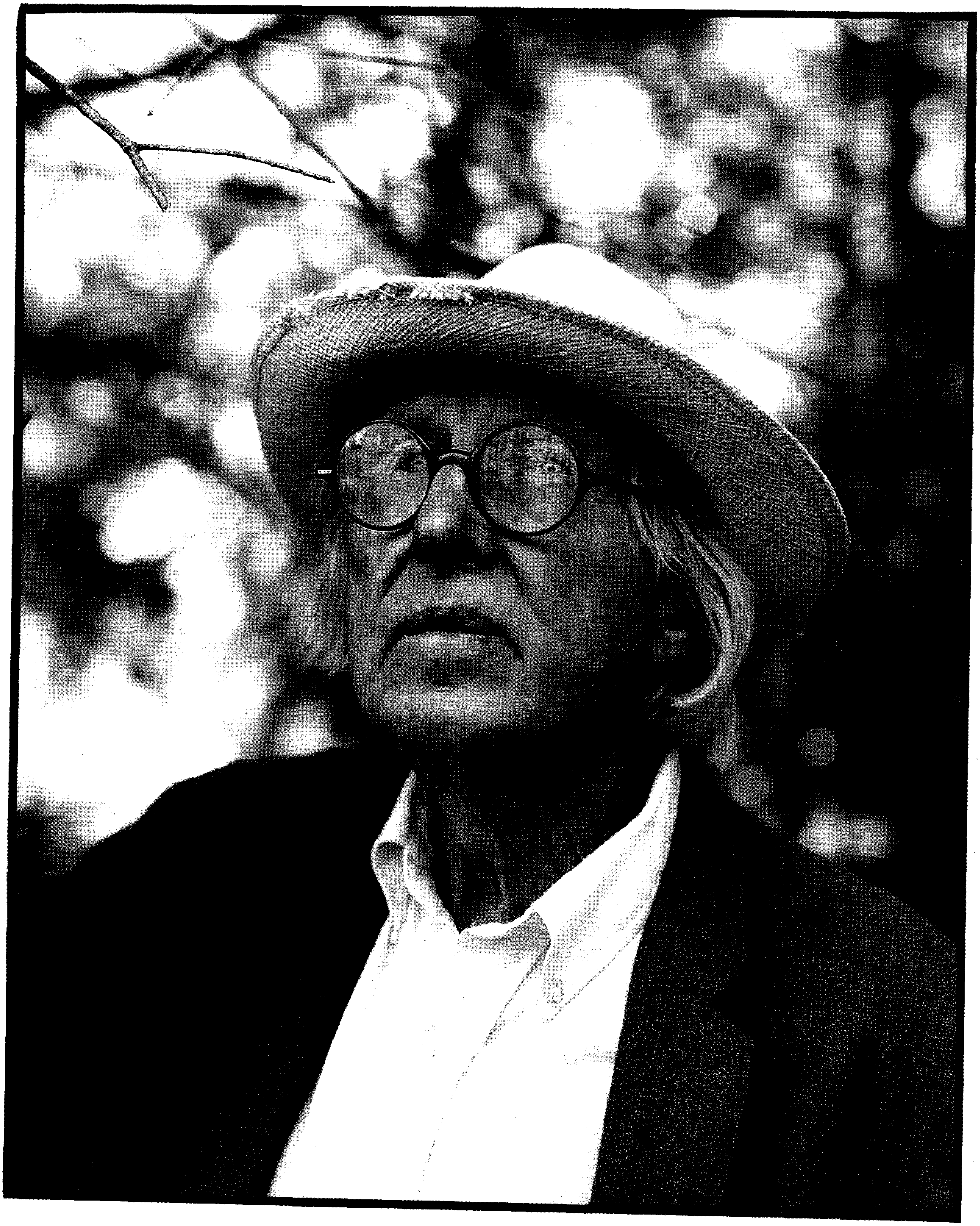
Clarissa Bronfman had planned to take Kiley around the Dutchess County property herself, but at the last minute she had gone to join her husband on the West Coast. The property was being shown to him instead by Michael Liffland, the estate manager, who had been employed there, with one or two interruptions, since 1969. Liffland was clearly thrilled by the prospect of working under Dan Kiley. ("I can't tell you how exciting this is for me," he told Kiley at one point.) Kiley, for his part, was thrilled by the prospect of rolling hills, three ponds, a lake, broad stretches of mown grass that had once been a private golf course, and, especially, several great stands of seventy-to-eighty-foot-tall Norway-spruce trees, which Liffland told him had been planted, as seedlings, in 1926. That, he went on to explain, was when the New York real-estate developer Fred F. French bought the property. French lost it ten years later, in the Depression; he sold the land, at a fraction of what he had paid for it, to Lowell Thomas, the world traveller, broadcaster, and author, and Thomas lived there for the next fifty years. (He had one of several houses on the estate turned into a studio from which he made his daily radio broadcasts.) Lowell Thomas left Hammersley Hill, as he called the place, to the University of Denver. The university sold it eventually to Dino De Laurentiis, the film producer, and after two subsequent sales it was acquired, four years ago, by Edgar Bronfman, Jr. At the time of Kiley's visit, the Bronfmans had been coming up for occasional weekends and staying in the guesthouse, because the brick mansion where Lowell Thomas had lived was in serious disrepair, but now they planned to restore the mansion, and they wanted Kiley to do something wonderful with the property as a whole. This could well become Kiley's most important private commission, and also his masterpiece, his Vaux-le-Vicomte. And there was no doubt that Kiley, at the age of eighty-two, was up to the challenge.

While Liffland piloted the golf cart, Kiley asked questions and let ideas rip. Was Bronfman thinking about reëstablishing the golf course?

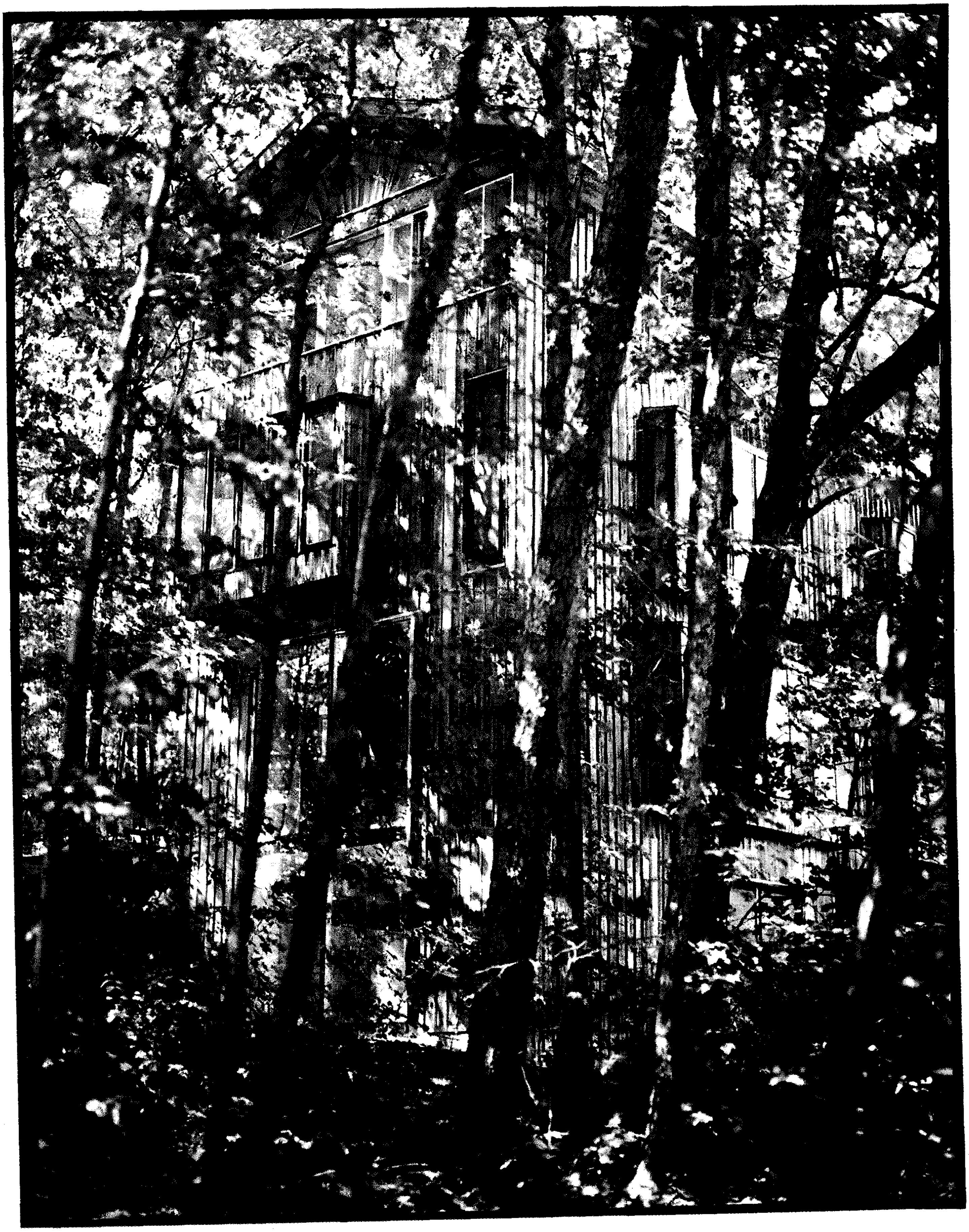
"I'm hoping he does," Liffland said.

"Look what a golf course can do," Kiley said. "It civilizes the landscape, and yet it's part of nature. We'll try to get him to do that. What really impresses me is these stands of Norway spruce—boy, if you have something like that to start with, it's

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC BOMAN



"That bastard single-handedly ruined more of the beautiful classic landscapes of England than anyone," Kiley says of the English landscape gardener Capability Brown. "It's not man and nature. It's not even man with nature. Man is nature, just like the trees."



The house that Kiley built in Vermont in 1975, which is now his office. He begins each project, he says, by "listening" to the site.

really fantastic. We'd want to articulate those a little more—give them more space on the sides, so they read as great walls of uninterrupted green." Traversing some dense pinewoods, through which the Bronfmans wanted their driveway to run, he talked of clearing away the dead lower branches and plastering the slope with hay-scented ferns and Christmas ferns. "*Polystichum acrostichoides*," he crooned. "They always make me think of the song that goes 'Across a crowded room.' I remember the Latin names better than the popular ones. What's that tree over there—a hackberry? I'm pretty open-minded about trees, but the hackberry is one I don't like much. Look at the form of it—no interest whatsoever."

The main house had a similar problem. A dark-red brick rectangle with high chimneys, it sat awkwardly on the land, neither dominating its site nor blending in with it. Kiley's first thought was to demolish the house, but when Liffland told him that the Bronfmans were planning a major renovation of it he began to see its virtues. He envisioned a fountain in the middle of an existing fine, large entrance courtyard. Or perhaps one very large beech tree. Or four beeches, one at each corner. Liffland had told him that Edgar Bronfman liked beech trees and willows. And Clarissa? Clarissa liked flowering things, Liffland said—lots of different colors.

During the two hours that Kiley spent going over the Bronfmans' property, he took no notes, made no sketches, spoke into no microcassettes. Later on, he would send his assistants down to take photographs and measurements, but on this first visit he wanted to "listen" to the site, as he put it, and taking notes would interfere with that delicate operation. "It's the same process on every project," he told me as we drove back to New York in the late afternoon. "I try to clean my mind of any ideas, which is impossible, of course; but on the first visit I want to be clear and open. I want to listen to all the information that comes in, which includes listening to the client, and out of that something starts to emerge."

A design should grow out of a landscape, rather than be imposed on it. That is Rule No. 1 for Kiley, who doesn't suffer rules gladly. He is a functionalist, who argues that there are no universally applicable design principles, and who approaches each job as a completely new set of conditions and problems. In more than half a century of very active practice, though, Kiley has established his reputation as the reigning classicist in landscape design, the maverick who has managed, against all odds, to draw his primary inspiration from Versailles, Vaux-le-Vicomte, and other masterworks by the great seventeenth-century landscapist André Le Nôtre. As the architect Jaquelin Robertson pointed out in 1993, "Ironically, it is Kiley—who was educated as a modernist, was sought out by the leading modernist architects, and grasped quickly modernist notions of space—who has done more than anyone else in his field to lead American landscape architecture back to its classical roots: to formal geometry; to the axis, the allée, the bosquet, the terrace, the *tapis vert;* to gravel courts and little-leaf lindens planted on close centers; to precise stone paths, and linear fountains."

Even a partial listing of Kiley's more important commissions makes you wonder why his name is not better known outside his profession. People who are familiar with the work of twenty or more living architects may have never heard of Kiley, whose landscape designs have provided the settings for so many buildings by those very architects. Kiley designed the wooded park that surrounds Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch in St. Louis. He is responsible for the plantings in the Ford Foundation's headquarters, in midtown Manhattan (the building is by Roche and Dinkeloo), and for the blocks of trees on Lincoln Center Plaza North, in front of the Vivian Beaumont Theatre. He landscaped I. M. Pei's East Building, inside and out, for the National Gallery of Art, in Washington; the John F. Kennedy Library, in Boston (I. M. Pei & Partners), in association with Mrs. Paul Mellon; the United States Air Force Academy, in Colorado (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill); the Oakland Museum (Roche and Dinkeloo); Rockefeller University, in the East Sixties (Harrison and Abramovitz); Dulles Airport (Eero Saarinen and Associates); the NCNB plaza, in Tampa (Harry Wolf Associates); the London Standard Chartered Bank atrium, in London (Fitzroy Robinson); the main pedestrian concourse for La Défense, in Paris; and the four-acre Fountain Place, in downtown Dallas (I. M. Pei & Partners). Kiley has designed some thirteen hundred landscape projects in all, about two-thirds of which have been realized. From his base in rural Vermont, where he and his wife, Anne, have lived since 1951 and brought up eight children, he goes wherever his busy practice takes him. Gregarious, indefatigable, full of Irish high spirits and self-regard, fond of high-cholesterol foods, Martinis, skiing, golf, and the multiple pleasures available to man-in-nature, he seems to have had an exceptionally good time throughout his long life. "It's always like a vacation to be with Dan," Jaquelin Robertson has said. "It's always light, it's always unexpected. It's always fun. . . . He was the antithesis of what most modern landscapes were about, and he reopened a door for us all."

GROWING up poor, the son of a construction manager in Roxbury, Massachusetts, Kiley knew early on that he could never be happy with an indoor job. As a teen-ager, his idea of a date was to take his girlfriend to the Arnold Arboretum, in Boston. Caddying on weekends got him interested in golf-course design, and that, in turn, started him reading books about landscape architecture. After graduating from high school, in 1930, he went to work—without pay—for a Boston landscape architect named Warren H. Manning, who had been an associate of Frederick Law Olmsted. He learned a great deal from Manning, who probably knew more about plants than anyone else of his era. Manning had been one of the founders (along with Olmsted's sons) of the American Society of Landscape Architects, in 1899, but in his opinion that body had become a hidebound bunch of traditionalists; he advised Kiley not to join it, and Kiley never has. Manning also told him not to study at the Harvard Department of Landscape Architecture, which had been established in 1900, but Kiley, uneasy about his lack of formal education, didn't take that piece of advice. He entered the Graduate School of Design at Harvard in 1936, as a special student, and stayed for two years, while continuing to work for Manning thirty hours a week.

Landscape architecture takes its cues from other art forms. "English landscape was invented by gardeners imitating foreign painters who were evoking classical authors," says a character in Tom Stoppard's play "Arcadia"—an overstatement with the ring of truth. The "natural" gardens that Capability Brown laid out for England's landed gentry in the eighteenth century, with their undulating contours, open vistas, carefully positioned clumps of trees, and ubiquitous watercourses in the middle distance, did bear a strong resemblance to the landscape paintings of Poussin and Claude Lorrain; and the picturesque style that came into vogue in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century—"romantic" wildness, broken sight lines, and such literary conceits as thatch-roofed "hermitages," complete with resident hermits—reflected the influence of that overwhelmingly popular new art form the gothic novel. The English garden was itself an art form, as arbitrary as the geometrically ordered landscapes that André Le Nôtre had perfected a century earlier in France, or the exuberantly theatrical villa gardens of Renaissance Italy (which were inspired by excavations at Hadrian's Villa and other classical sites, and by the letters of Pliny the Younger). The urge to impose aesthetic Edens on wild nature has been with us since the ancient civilizations of China, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, at any rate, and its persistence tends to bear out Kiley's notion about man and nature: the process is just as much a part of nature, after all, as the bird's nest or the beaver dam.

Until the nineteen-thirties, garden design in this country had been content to imitate European models—the English garden for private homes and public parks, and the more formal French style for institutional settings. Olmsted, the dominant American landscape architect of his era, was working within the English picturesque tradition when he and his British-born partner, Calvert Vaux, laid out Central Park, Prospect Park, the Boston park system, and other large-scale public facilities. New thinking about their profession had never ranked high on the agenda of most American landscape architects, and it certainly did not impinge on the curriculum at Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

Walter Gropius took over the Department of Architecture while Kiley was there, and shook it out of its long torpor. Harvard suddenly woke up to advanced Bauhaus ideas about painting, sculpture, the graphic arts, and architecture, but very little of this excitement filtered down to the Landscape Architecture faculty. Gropius did not concern himself with the natural landscape (the Bauhaus had had no department of landscape design), and Harvard's landscape students kept right on studying and applying the lessons of the past.

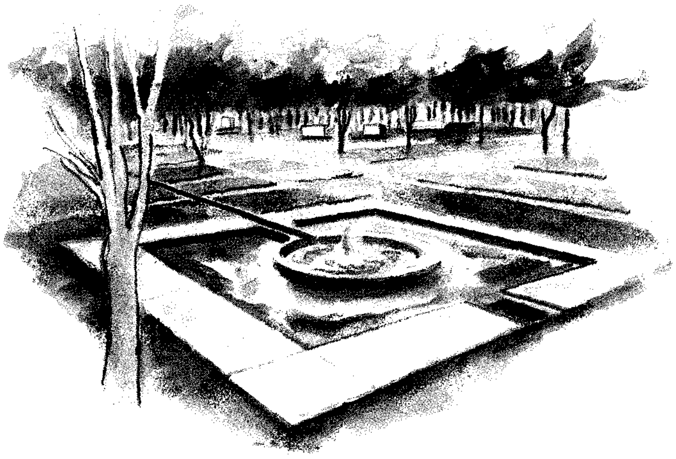
Gazing endlessly at slides of famous French, Italian, and English gardens while the lecturer droned on about their formal details, Kiley was monumentally bored. So were Garrett Eckbo and James Rose, two fellow-students who would soon become, with Kiley, the leading exponents of modernism in landscape design. All three absorbed the new concepts of space and structure which were being taught in Gropius's architecture classes. They studied the plans of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, whose walls, freed of their load-bearing function, became floating planes that defined space without limiting it. The integration of interior and exterior space in Miesian architecture was a revelation to Eckbo—he later made it a central element of hundreds of California gardens—but the landscape faculty at Harvard, with one or two exceptions, couldn't have been less interested. The landscape faculty, according to Eckbo, "was telling us carefully that, since trees were not made in factories, we need not worry about a modern landscape architecture."

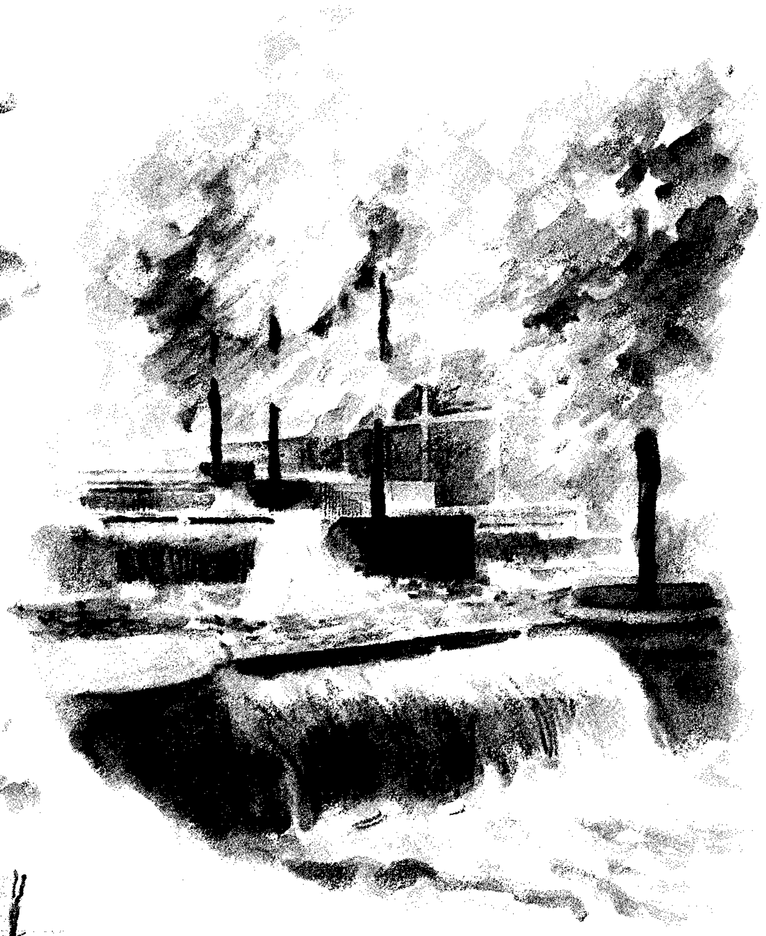
Kiley had planned to return to Warren Manning's office as a partner, but Manning's death, in 1938, took away that option. He left Harvard without a degree that spring, and migrated to Washington, D.C., where he worked with the architect Louis Kahn on several low-cost housing projects and did a few landscaping jobs for private clients. He hadn't found his own direction yet, but he was having a great time. In the winter, he went off on ski trips to New Hampshire—he had been an ardent skier since 1934—and it was on one of those trips, in 1941, that he met Anne Sturges, who came from a well-to-do family in Connecticut. "She was a great skier," he said. "Better than I was."

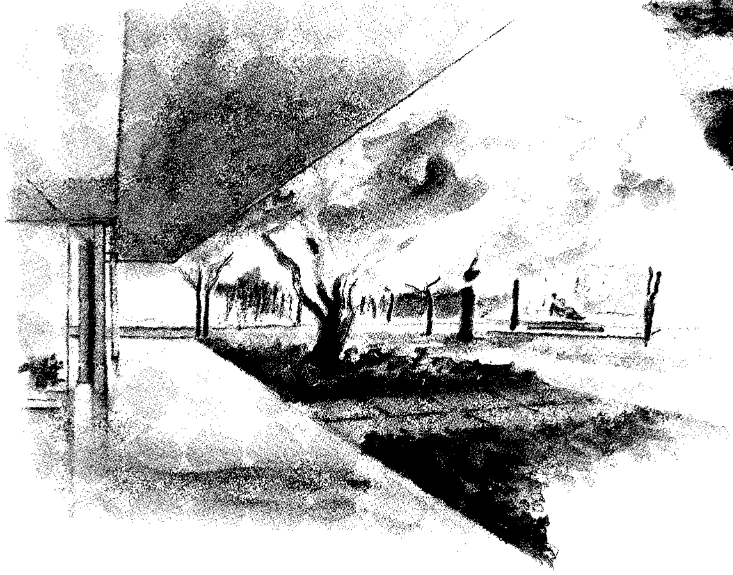
"I thought he was like Thoreau," Anne told me. "When I took him down to meet my family in Fairfield, they just couldn't believe it. He was what they knew as a 'bounder.' I remember just how he came into the house—walked through it like a king, knocking over all the symbolic family heirlooms. They said, 'Hold on to your pocketbooks, hold on to your lives. Oh, poor Anne!' " Anne and Dan Kiley were both thirty when they got married, in 1942.

The war controlled everyone's future by then. After a stint in the field artillery, Kiley transferred to the newly formed Office of Strategic Services, and there took over Eero Saarinen's job as chief of design. The job led, after the war ended, to Kiley's being sent to Germany to design the conversion of the Nuremberg Palace of Justice into a courthouse for the Nazi-war-crime trials.

Although Kiley had very little time to do anything else during this first trip to Europe, he did make several trips to Paris. He visited Versailles, and the even more exquisite garden that André Le Nôtre had laid out at the Château de Sceaux, on the outskirts of Paris. In later years, he said that it was not until 1958, when he took a three-month tour of France, Germany, England, Ireland, Italy, and Spain, that he really experienced the great gardens of Europe, but seeing Versailles for the first time, in 1945, hit him very hard. All those hours of looking at slides and listening to dull lectures in Harvard classrooms had given him no sense of the real thing: the formal geometry of axial views, tree-lined allées, symmetrical parterres, steps, canals, terraces, and lawns; the use of fountains, cascades, sculptural groups, arbors, and other architectural elements to animate and vary the composition; and, for all its magnificence, the human scale of the enormous enterprise. This was nature reconceived as a theatrical setting for royalty, to be sure—the long perspectives were designed, like the Hall of Mirrors, to echo the Sun King's limitless power and magnificence—but Kiley saw no reason that Le Nôtre's methods of controlling and unifying vast outdoor spaces couldn't be adapted to more modern and democratic ends. Garrett Eckbo and James Rose, his fellow Harvard radicals, had ruled out axial views and geometrical patterns—it was "fundamentally wrong to begin with axes or shapes in plan," Rose wrote in an influential article called "Freedom in the Garden"—but Kiley had always leaned toward inclusion rather than exclusion. (At Harvard, he got so carried away by pictures of ancient Chinese gardens that he took to putting moon gates in his drawings and signing them "Ki-Lee.") "Why reject symmetry?" he asked himself. "Why reject allées?" The important thing was to treat landscape design in the Miesian manner, as a free play of interconnected, three-dimensional volumes. Modern space was dynamic, not static. The same "open" approach guided the work of Thomas Church, Christopher Tunnard, Lawrence Halprin, and other prominent







LIKE A WALK IN THE WOODS

Clockwise from lower left: The grounds of Eero Saarinen's 1957 J. Irwin Miller house, in Columbus, Indiana, Kiley's "breakaway from other people in the field"; the NCNB plaza, in Tampa; and the water garden at Fountain Place, in Dallas, a four-acre public plaza surrounding a glass bank tower designed by I. M. Pei & Partners.

RUBEN ALTERIO

landscape architects of the postwar period. But, in the century's long and halting search for a landscape architecture that would encompass the modern movement, Kiley was almost alone in soliciting help from the classical past.

It would be a while, however, before he had a chance to do so. For the next few years, out of uniform and living with Anne and their growing family (three boys and three girls by 1950) in Franconia, there was so little landscape-design work available that he built houses instead. Good things have usually come Kiley's way out of the blue, though, and in 1947 the good thing was a call from Eero Saarinen, who, five years earlier, had arranged for Kiley to move into his design job with the O.S.S. Saarinen wanted Kiley to work with him on the architectural competition for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, on the banks of the Mississippi River, in St. Louis. It was the first important architectural competition since the war, and most of the top architectural firms in the country were submitting proposals.

Kiley had reservations about Saarinen's plan for a five-hundred-and-ninety-foot stainless-steel arch. He felt that it was too static, for one thing. Saarinen would not be budged, of course, so Kiley buckled down to designing a wooded park that would link the arch to the city, the river, and the American West, to which the arch was supposed to constitute a symbolic gateway. Although the Saarinen team's proposal won the competition, political squabbles and fund-raising problems kept the arch from going up until the nineteen-sixties; in the interim, Kiley was taken off the job (over Saarinen's vigorous protests), and the National Park Service eviscerated his landscape design. Nevertheless, the Gateway Arch established Kiley's name in the profession, and it cemented his professional relationship with Eero Saarinen, who was rapidly becoming one of the busiest architects around.

Kiley landscaped a number of private estates in the New England area during the next few years. In 1951, he moved his family into a large Colonial house in Charlotte, Vermont, overlooking Lake Champlain; it had belonged to Sir Wilfred Grenfell, the English author and medical missionary to Labrador. They chose this area because it was beautiful, affordable, and close to a major airport (in Burlington), so that Kiley could be almost anywhere within a few hours. It was important for them to live close to nature, he

THIS CO-OPERATIVE APARTMENT BUILDING WILL BE TORN DOWN AND REPLACED BY A MUCH MORE CO-OPERATIVE APARTMENT BUILDING.
THE MANAGEMENT

felt, and so did Anne, who wanted nothing to do with city life, or with the social contacts that Dan's work increasingly required of him. By this time, Kiley's landscape designs were moving in the direction of greater clarity and simplicity, without the eccentric forms (amoeba-shaped pools, sawtooth borders) that spelled modernism to so many of his colleagues. His real breakthrough came in 1955, though, and once again the precipitating agent was Eero Saarinen.

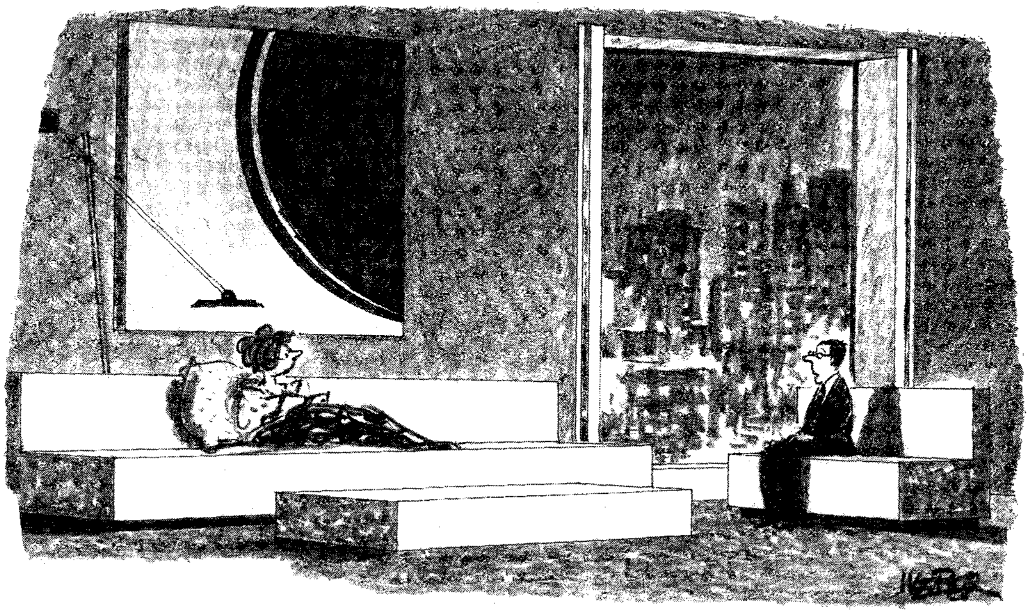
J. Irwin Miller, a Midwestern manufacturer of diesel engines, had decided to turn his home town of Columbus, Indiana, into "the Athens of the Prairie," by hiring the best architects he could find to build there. The house that Saarinen designed for Miller and his wife, a one-story rectangle with four separate areas grouped around a central, sunken living room, had much in common with Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion: its open plan allowed each section to flow freely into the communal space, and established only the subtlest division between indoors and outdoors. Saarinen insisted that Miller hire Kiley to do the landscape design. What Kiley did was to integrate the house with its ten-acre surroundings, using the same geometric-grid pattern that Saarinen had used. He developed a series of outdoor garden "rooms," defined and bordered by closely planted rows of trees: arborvitae hedges clipped to a height of twelve feet; an allée of honey locusts on the west façade; three rows of sycamores in a long, nearby meadow. The precise geometry of the house itself was echoed by the nearest outdoor spaces, which unfolded into somewhat more informal areas, and these, in turn, opened out into the meadow. Although the Millers changed a few of Kiley's plantings over the next four decades, their garden remains one of the gems of postwar landscape architecture: an almost perfect marriage of modern and neoclassic ideals—Mies van der Rohe hand in hand with Le Nôtre. For Kiley, it was "a breakaway from other people in the field, my first really total break into classic geometric design."

FORTY years after the Miller house, and two hours after his initial tour of the Bronfman estate, the dean of American landscape architects steps out onto the terrace of a rather scruffy penthouse apartment on Lexington Avenue. The plantings there are quite recent, and my wife and I, who live in the apartment, are a little embarrassed, because they include a profusion of white-and-purple petunias (Kiley isn't wild about annuals) and six clumps of the sort of beach grass that Kiley referred to, driving back from Dutchess County, as a trendy item, much overused at the moment. Tactfully ignoring the petunias and the grasses, Kiley focusses on a newly built arbor, which covers about a third of the outdoor space. It's fine, he says, but it should be extended the full length of the terrace, to shade the apartment from the hot afternoon sun. (The terrace faces west.) And instead of grapevines, which we hoped to see covering at least part of the arbor by now, but which seem instead to be giving in to the summer's unending heat and drought, he recommends *Wisteria japonica*—white Japanese wisteria. It's the hardiest kind, he says, and it has the longest blossoms—eighteen inches long, as against twelve inches for the Chinese variety. There's also a hybrid Japanese strain with blue blossoms—prettier than the Chinese purple wisteria, "although I'm open to all colors," Kiley says. He advises us to staple two-inch-square wire mesh to the sides and the top of the arbor and grow *Parthenocissus tricuspidata*—Boston ivy—on it. Boston ivy grows very fast, he tells us, and it is hardy enough to take the western sun and the winter winds; it loses its leaves in the winter, but if you combine it with the less hardy English ivy, which doesn't, you can have a nice year-round pattern, shady in summer and more open in the cold months. At each end of the terrace, Kiley would like to see a small fountain ("You can make a fountain for a few bucks with some rocks and a garden hose"), and columns of tall Japanese yews, planted very close together and clipped to form a solid green wall. On second thought, he recommends a dark-green strain of arborvitae instead of yews; besides being hardier, it's a lot cheaper. Years ago, Kiley made up a list of alternative plant materials, expensive and non-expensive, so that he could adjust the cost of his landscape designs without altering the designs themselves. Instead of American holly trees, at a hundred dollars apiece, for example, he can offer ten-dollar buckthorns; staghorn sumac substitutes for Japanese maple, privet for boxwood, sweet pepper bush for magnolia, viburnum for rhododendron, and on and on.

Unlike some landscape architects, Kiley is a first-rate plantsman. He knows his natural materials backward and forward, usually by their Latin names, but he doesn't go in much for the exotic specimens that garden designers like to provide for their more competitive clients. Kiley has his doubts about the current craze for gardening in this country. The fact that Americans are reported to have spent almost twenty-six billion dollars on garden supplies last year; the soaring demand for seed catalogues and mail-order garden tools from places like Smith & Hawken; the huge garden departments at suburban K marts and Home Depots—none of this strikes him as being particularly significant. "I think the interest has always been there," he says when I ask him about it. "We had the City Beautiful movement at the turn of the century, and the America Beautiful movement in the nineteen-twenties, and then Lady Bird Johnson—I had to follow her around once in Washington, when she was planting daisies and pansies and stuff. Flowers are wonderful, of course, but they're like the fingernails on your body. The garden magazines all show you a bunch of flowers and say let nature be your guide, but they don't know the first goddam thing about nature. The real trouble today is that we've become so disconnected from nature—real nature. Maybe all this interest in gardening means that people are trying to get connected again, but in most cases the connection is nostalgic and sentimental. They want to copy nature, which usually means copying somebody else's picture of what they think nature ought to look like. The way to connect with nature isn't by planting little flowers around your house. I keep saying that landscape architecture should be like a walk in the woods; it should have that sense of mystery and perpetual growth, moving through and going on and on, without stopping."

Olmsted had the wrong idea about nature, in Kiley's opinion. "I think he's been overglamorized," Kiley told me. "His main thing was getting open space for Central Park, but that was the period of Victorian romantic parks, and to me it was a bad movement." And Olmsted, too, made the mistake of trying to imitate nature. "The trouble with the planting in Central Park is that it's a miscellaneous array of trees and shrubs that have no connection with one another," Kiley said. "Three red oaks and seven honey locusts and two maples—that's not nature at all. Nature would have thousands of the same tree. Nature is continuous, not scattered. That's why we love walking in a pinewood, for example—it's like being in a cathedral. Besides, Central Park has something near eight hundred and fifty acres, and ninety per cent of it is not being used. People skateboard and bike and swarm all over it now, of course, and that's good, but still they're using only a tiny bit of the Park, and for a lot of people in the city it's too far away. Ideally, you'd have Central Park and also a thousand acres of other, little parks spread throughout the city, the way it's done in Italy and France. Because the city is nature, too, or it ought to be."

KILEY'S influence on contemporary landscape design has been pervasive but subtle. The vast majority of American gardens are not laid out by professional garden designers, of course, and, even when they are, the garden designers are not likely to be certified landscape architects. Garden design is only one aspect of landscape architecture, which concerns itself primarily with space and structure and only incidentally with garden beds, herbaceous borders, and ornamental shrubbery. Kiley's work at the upper levels of this design pyramid has, nonetheless, had its effect on gardeners who have never heard of him. For some years now, there has been a gradual movement away from the eccentric, asymmetrical gardens that everybody in California seemed to want in the nineteen-fifties, and a general retreat from the overuse of flowers and flowering shrubs that made so many suburban plots look like multicolored table doilies. Everybody wants low-maintenance gardens these days, and wants them to look old and established as soon as the plantings are in—two things that Kiley himself has trouble arranging, although his fondness for closely planted trees helps. Trees are the main structural elements in any Kiley design, and more and more landscapers today seem to be using them the way Kiley does, set out in straight lines to form allées, or grouped together in groves. Clean lines and axial views, running water, gravel walks, stone terraces, arbors, pavilions, and other Kiley trademarks crop up in gardens from East Hampton to Santa Barbara, moreover, if not always with the bravura assurance that Kiley brings to all his projects, large and small. "There are plenty of good landscape architects," the architect Harry Wolf said



"Darling, a rather uncomfortable distance has developed between me and the furniture."

recently. "But there's only one Dan Kiley, as there was only one Le Nôtre."

Patience and time are the often overlooked keys to landscape architecture; it may take twenty years before Kiley's plantings on the Bronfman estate reach their maturity. By the same token, the best landscape designs can be sabotaged by poor maintenance or misguided alterations. Kiley complains that his tree plantings at Lincoln Center and on the third block of Independence Mall, in Philadelphia, are being thinned out by the current landscape supervisors in both places. "I have a hard time with everybody about that," he told me. "There are so many examples in Europe where they do it right—those wonderful long, straight lines of poplars along the roads—but here they worry about planting trees too close together. Ninety per cent of American nurserymen and a great many American architects plant trees in the city forty feet on center, and it's wrong." ("Forty feet on center" means that the center of each tree is forty feet from the center of the next one.) "They treat trees as specimens rather than as structure. Look at the way trees grow in the forest. And look at the Tuileries, as I keep saying—half a mile of horse chestnuts planted twelve and a half feet on center, and they've been there for hundreds of years. When one dies, it's just replaced, and nobody knows the difference."

Trees and water, more than plants, are the building blocks of Kiley's work. It's not a question of whether to use water, he says, but of how and where to use it. "You should use everything man has thought of since the Garden of Eden—springs, brooks, waterfalls, pools, fountains, limpid sheets of reflective water. Even the tiniest trickle does something for the soul." Kiley's most spectacular water garden is Fountain Place, in Dallas, a four-acre public plaza surrounding a glass bank tower. "Dallas gets damn hot in the summer," Kiley recalls thinking. "Do we really want another barren stone plaza reflecting the heat? I said, 'No, there shall be water.' " Godlike pose and self-mocking inflection here. "And I said, 'You won't be looking at the water, you'll *be* the water.' So we put in this grove of four hundred and forty bald-cypress trees, planted fifteen feet on center, both ways." The trees are in granite planters, and the water is virtually flush with the tops of the planters and with the pedestrian walkways. Two hundred and sixty-three bubbler fountains keep the water moving, and a computer-programmed central fountain, which is lighted at night, throws up a hundred and sixty jets in changing geometric patterns.

PEOPLE who visit Kiley's place in Vermont are struck by the absence of anything that looks like landscape architecture. Trees have been planted to give shade in summer, and evergreen hedges to break the wind in winter, but there are no formal vistas, no bosks or *tapis verts*, no gravel paths, no allées, and very few flower beds. The principal watercourse is a beaver pond, in whose design Kiley had no part—every day, he walks past it very quietly, so as not to disgruntle the beavers. Sometimes, as the best landscape architects know, the right thing to do with nature is nothing at all.

At ease and shoeless, his white shirt unbuttoned to the navel, Kiley sits at a long trestle table on the top floor of a house in the woods which he built in 1975 for himself and Anne to live in after their children grew up. They don't live there anymore. A few years ago, Anne moved farther up the hill, into a three-room house she'd had made to her specifications. It has no electricity, and the heating is by wood stoves. Kiley built himself a slightly larger house about thirty yards away (too close, Anne complains), and then he built another house, right next to it, to sleep in, and now he is having a room built onto that. The Kiley family is almost always in the throes of construction. When they lived in the Grenfell house, on the lake, Dan was forever tearing down or putting up walls. "I probably ruined the place," he concedes. After eight years in the lake house, with its exhilarating views and its six bathrooms, they moved ten miles inland, to an old farmhouse on two hundred and fifty acres. (It cost them nineteen thousand dollars in 1959.) The younger Kiley children did most of their growing up in that house, which initially had only one bathroom. When Dan and Anne moved to the new house up the hill, in 1975, the farmhouse became the office. In those days, it was a fairly large office. Kiley had a partner, Peter Ker Walker, and about a dozen assistants. When Walker left, in 1985, though, Kiley decided he would rather have fewer projects and do all the work himself; today, he has two secretaries and four drafting assistants. Eventually, he added a fourth floor to the 1975 house and moved his office there, and it was then that he and Anne started building their own houses in the woods. One of the strengths of their marriage has been Anne's quirky independence: she keeps her distance and her sense of humor.

Sitting at his long desk, jumping up frequently to gesture, emphasize a point, or demonstrate a ski turn, Kiley sets a lively conversational pace. He is talking at the moment, as he so often does, about man's interaction with nature. "I'm more influenced by functional land use than by any sort of design theory," he tells me. "All farmland is beautiful, and orchards, the way the fields are cut. That's real landscape design, dynamic and exciting—a natural intersection of man and the earth. And notice how it's usually geometric. Some people wonder why I'm interested in geometry, but when you fly across the country and look down it's one big geometric grid, from East to West. What I love is the way nature infiltrates itself through the pattern, the fingers of nature, which are mainly drainage patterns.

"The trouble is, we're destroying the environment," he went on, suddenly gloomy. "The planet's going, just like the Roman Empire. It can't continue like this, with the pollution, and the cars, and the corporations. I know some of the conservationists and environmentalists, and in their own lives they're doing just the opposite of what they preach. One of them came up here recently. You should have seen the way he walked in the woods—

MAUGHAM'S BATH

As a writer, Somerset Maugham judged himself a leading "second-rater," but as a host he belonged among the upper echelons. From the time he settled in Cap Ferrat, in the late twenties, he welcomed a succession of writers and artists to his Villa Mauresque, including, in 1962, Irving Penn. It was Maugham's bathroom that most caught the photographer's attention, particularly its highly polished Kota figures, from Africa. "I was interested that Maugham shaved in his bathtub," Penn says, "and I was amused at the size of his initial on the bath towel."

Photograph by Irving Penn

ALMOST SOLD
S. GROSS

• •

tripping over rocks, stepping on the hepaticas, and chain-smoking the whole time. I'm pessimistic about the environment, but as long as we're alive we can still be joyful."

Six years ago, skiing down a mountain at Sun Valley, Kiley had a feeling that something was wrong with him—he had to keep stopping. It turned out to be angina. His doctor put him in the hospital for an angioplasty, and when that failed, two months later, two doctors told him he needed immediate bypass surgery. Kiley had been reading up on heart disease, though, and after thinking it over, and talking with his son Gus, he decided not to have the operation. He took matters into his own hands, put himself on the Dean Ornish diet (no more cholesterol, no more Martinis), and willed his arteries to open up. They seem to have complied. After a year of feeling miserable, he started to feel a lot better, and today, although he's careful about what he eats, he is back on Martinis and back on skis—both downhill and cross-country.

One result of this experience was that it brought him closer to his family. The kids didn't see very much of him when they were growing up. They all remember how much fun it was when he came home from one of his trips—there would be "money rallies" (Dan throwing pocketfuls of coins in the air and the children diving for them) and exciting stories and a lot of boisterous fun and games—but it was really Anne who brought them up, with considerable help from the older children. "We lived an incredibly carefree, primitivistic sort of life," Gus recalls. "We were out in the woods all the time, and none of us wore any clothes until we were adolescents—the rumor in town was that it was a nudist colony up there. Pop would pick out one kid to go with him on a big trip every year or so, but I guess he felt we didn't need any formal guidance or help in getting out into the world, and Mother, who was pretty sheltered in her life, didn't know much about the outside world herself. I can remember, when I was little, Mother sitting under the pine trees with the sun sifting through, playing her violin—I thought the music was coming from the pine trees. Sometimes, on hot nights, Pop would hook up the tractor to the hay wagon, and we'd all pile our foam mattresses on it and he'd drive out into the field and we'd sleep there. The whole family sleeping under the stars—it was just so beautiful. We had a lovely time, but we lived in this self-contained little world, and when we had to leave it—well, that was sort of traumatic."

Anne found her own means of coping with Dan's robust ego. "Oh my God, his ego is horrible," she told me, her bright eyes beaming. "Well, I think it's so bad it's innocent. I used to say to myself, 'What *is* this person, what *is* this drive, and where do I come in?' I thought it was going to be a journey for both of us, but it turned out to be a solo trip. But then I realized how petty all that was, and I changed. Instead of battling things, I sort of widened my gyre. The children used to say I gave him everything he wanted, but I don't give him everything I *want*. I give myself everything I want, and that way we're both free." Anne reads prodigiously—Dan is in awe of her knowledge—and writes stories that only Gus and Gus's wife are allowed to read. And she follows with great interest the unfolding "novel" of Dan's career. "He started a novel about himself at the very beginning, and it's gone right on developing, straight, straight, straight through," she said.

Kiley hates being asked about the future of landscape architecture. The future is now, as far as he's concerned, and always has been. Nevertheless, some rather interesting things are going on, in a profession that has been historically resistant to new ideas. A few landscape firms have moved into large-scale master planning for college campuses, corporations, and urban centers—the sort of planning that architects used to be able to reserve for themselves. Meanwhile, professional landscape architects are running into competition from the growing number of "environmental" artists, whose plein-air palette often involves trees, grass, and other natural elements. The earth-art movement of the nineteen-seventies, when Robert Smithson built his "Spiral Jetty" in the Great Salt Lake, and Michael Heizer bulldozed a Nevada mesa for his "Double Negative," led to less grandiose but no less original initiatives by people like Martha Schwartz, who became a landscape architect after having studied to be an artist. Schwartz made her mark with a "bagel garden" in Boston—a formal garden of purple argentums, clipped boxwood, and shellacked, but real, bagels from the corner deli (the bagels were laid out in straight rows)—and she has gone on to use living and artificial materials in a number of public projects, the latest of which involves the redesign of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Two years ago, Kiley was fired as the landscape architect for the still unfinished Getty Center in Los Angeles—apparently because his plan was too geometric—and the job of designing the central garden area of the new Getty complex was given to the California artist Robert Irwin. Unlike Richard Meier, the Getty's architect, Kiley was not especially bitter about his firing. Although he has no great enthusiasm for the newest forms of environmental art—"The longer I live, the more I get away from precious things called design and art," he said recently—he rarely has anything very critical to say about living colleagues or competitors, and it is amazing how universal their admiration for him is. "He's a great artist," Martha Schwartz said of him last summer. "He really is interested in the forming of rational spaces, and his work is transcendent."

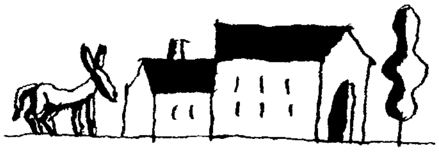
The future for Kiley is whatever he himself happens to be working on. A dozen Kiley projects are in one stage or another at the moment. He recently finished a two-million-dollar landscaping job for the Martin Kimmels, in Connecticut: two twenty-five-foot copper-beech trees (at thirty thousand dollars apiece; instant gardens don't come cheap), a row of pleached lindens, pagoda-roofed pavilions for the cutting garden and the tennis court, a reshaped pond. Kiley also persuaded the Kimmels to paint the outside of the house white instead of brown, and to make a number of changes inside as well. He is currently working with I. M. Pei's firm on a research center in Novato, California, and with Peter Rose on a forty-acre training facility for the Chicago Bears. He recently collaborated with DMJM/Keating on a competition proposal for what may be one of the largest landscape gardens in the world, in Korea. "We probably won't win that one," Kiley said of the Korean job. "I went to meet with the DMJM/Keating people, and worked it out with them in one day. I said we'd put in a huge reflecting pool, and a fourteen-hundred-foot allée of trees flush with the pool, going out at a right angle to an axis that connects with a certain mountain. It's powerful, big—bigger than the Taj Mahal."

There was a time, in the nineteen-seventies, when architects might have hesitated to use Kiley on certain projects. "I was doing a corporate headquarters in Connecticut, and I brought Dan in to meet the chairman of the board, who himself was rather interested in landscaping," Kevin Roche told me. "Dan came into his office looking like one of the original street people—old, torn Army overcoat, no socks, pants hiked up, hair flying. When he left, the chairman turned to me and said, 'Where the hell did you dig up that guy?' " Kiley still tends to wear his clothes until they fall apart, but this habit doesn't seem to upset clients anymore.

It certainly hasn't upset the Bronfmans. "Clarissa kissed me twice," Kiley reported, very pleased, after he visited the Dutchess County estate again, with both of them. "They took me in a helicopter, and we walked over the whole place together. They seemed very excited. They're wonderful clients. I think he should run for President."

The important thing, Kiley said to me a day or so later, was to get the structure of the landscape right in relation to the house. Doing so would involve functional changes—planting shade trees, putting in windbreaks, opening up good views and closing down bad ones. He wanted to establish a stronger relationship between the house and the nearest pond by extending the present lawn—making it a large, square *tapis vert* that would go right out to the pond, and cutting a new bank for the pond so that lawn and pond would meet in a straight line. He had ideas about a terrace on the west side of the house, and a tree-lined canal, and a formal allée of tall trees, and a secret (hidden) garden, and a redesigned driveway and entrance court, and a jogging and cross-country-ski trail following the perimeter of the property, and a lot of other things. "Proportion is what makes it beautiful," he said. "Proportion, scale, relationships, texture, light and shade, the material you use and how you edge it: all those things have to be like the ski turn—cor-*rect.* If they're not, they're weak. I love the feeling that you should be like an athlete in everything. You should be in training, really, to be fully aware of what you're doing."

Kiley says his ideal client should have an open mind, an open pocketbook, and an open schedule. The Bronfmans meet those qualifications splendidly—at least, Clarissa Bronfman does. Her husband's schedule is so crowded these days that she had to negotiate with his secretary for their helicopter visit to the property. Anyway, the country estate is Clarissa's project, and she sounds very enthusiastic about Kiley's plans for it. "I have a chemistry with Dan," she told me, over the telephone. "I tell Edgar, 'Listen, you have a big competitor, because I am in love with Dan.' At our first meeting, we spoke about a Brazilian landscape architect that I love—Roberto Burle Marx, who used to work with my grandfather in Venezuela. My grandfather built country clubs and golf courses." (Burle Marx, who died in 1994, is so far the only landscape architect to have been given a one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art.) "Dan does not want to shape nature into something different," she says. "He wants to enhance what is there."



Staying open is what keeps Kiley in business. "On a lot of projects, some things don't come out right, either through your own fault or through somebody else's," he confided. "But often the corrective measures turn out to be better than the original plan. It's all part of the process of growth, which is what nature is. Everything comes from the site, from the clients and their attitudes and sensibilities, and from your own reactions. It's a moving process. The design gets better the more open and accepting you are, because then it's not static, it's coming out of life in action. Too many architects do it differently—they want to impose a fixed scheme. Not the great ones, of course. Le Corbusier said that creativity is a patient search. I'm saying that it's a joyful discovery. It's a patient search *and* a joyful discovery."

AT the best (corner) table of a surprisingly good French restaurant in Essex, New York, just across Lake Champlain from the ferry landing at Charlotte, Dan and Anne Kiley are having dinner with two of their daughters, Kaki and Gracie. Dan's eighty-third birthday is a week off, and the conversation touches briefly, very briefly, on the subject of old age. "To me, it's very vital and exciting," Anne says, "but to Dan—I think the book of his life is so fascinating, it's going to go right on and skip old age."

Dan says, tapping the ash from a wholly imaginary cigar, "Old age means I have to sit back more when I make a powder turn." ◆

FAMILY LIFE

THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

There was a place that was to be for reading and writing and quiet contemplation—then the babies came.

BY KATHRYN HARRISON

THE children are young enough so that the passage between our two bedrooms is still umbilical, a door through which I travel nightly once or twice, between midnight and dawn, sometimes more often. Summoned by a cry, impelled by a worry or nightmare of my own, I don't wake fully in the journey from our bed to our son's (nine steps) or our daughter's (fourteen). I kneel beside whichever child I've come to comfort; sometimes I let my cheek rest on the foot of the bed and fall back into my dreams. When I rouse myself, minutes or hours later, I am cold, stiff, confused. The night-light, which seems so weak at bedtime that it fails to illuminate the cars and dolls and blocks underfoot, dazzles my just opened eyes. The entire room is gold and glowing, and I can see each eyelash curled against his cheek, count the pale freckles on her nose.

Boy and girl, they are still young enough to share this large room that adjoins our bedroom, the room that, innocent of children, my husband and I imagined would be a library. After all, it has a whole wall of floor-to-ceiling bookcases. When we moved into this brownstone in Brooklyn, I transferred novels and poems and essays from their boxes (packed as they had been shelved, alphabetically) directly into the empty cases. At last, here was a home with built-in shelves! A fireplace, and furniture inherited from the grandmother who raised me—antique steamer trunks, mahogany chairs and desk, a chaise longue for more desultory study—contributed to our literary aspirations for the space.

Now only the chaise remains. All but the top four shelves are emptied of grownup books and filled with toys, picture books, art supplies. I have removed novels and essays, poems and histories as I have needed to, in response to our children's ability to reach and climb. I carried them upstairs and stacked them, "A"s and "M"s and "Z"s all jumbled together and furred with dust. This was the way the room was transformed from library to nursery: book by book, shelf by shelf, chair by chair. I wonder if it is by equally small increments that we become parents, as our children claim another and another sinew of devotion.

Our daughter's arrival was followed by that of her crib. Hundred-spindled, made of fruitwood, it displaced two chairs and the desk. When she woke at two or at four and called me to her, I stumbled from our bed to the crib and reached over its tall side. I took her into my arms and took us both into the chaise, where we ultimately fell asleep together, my nipple still in her mouth.

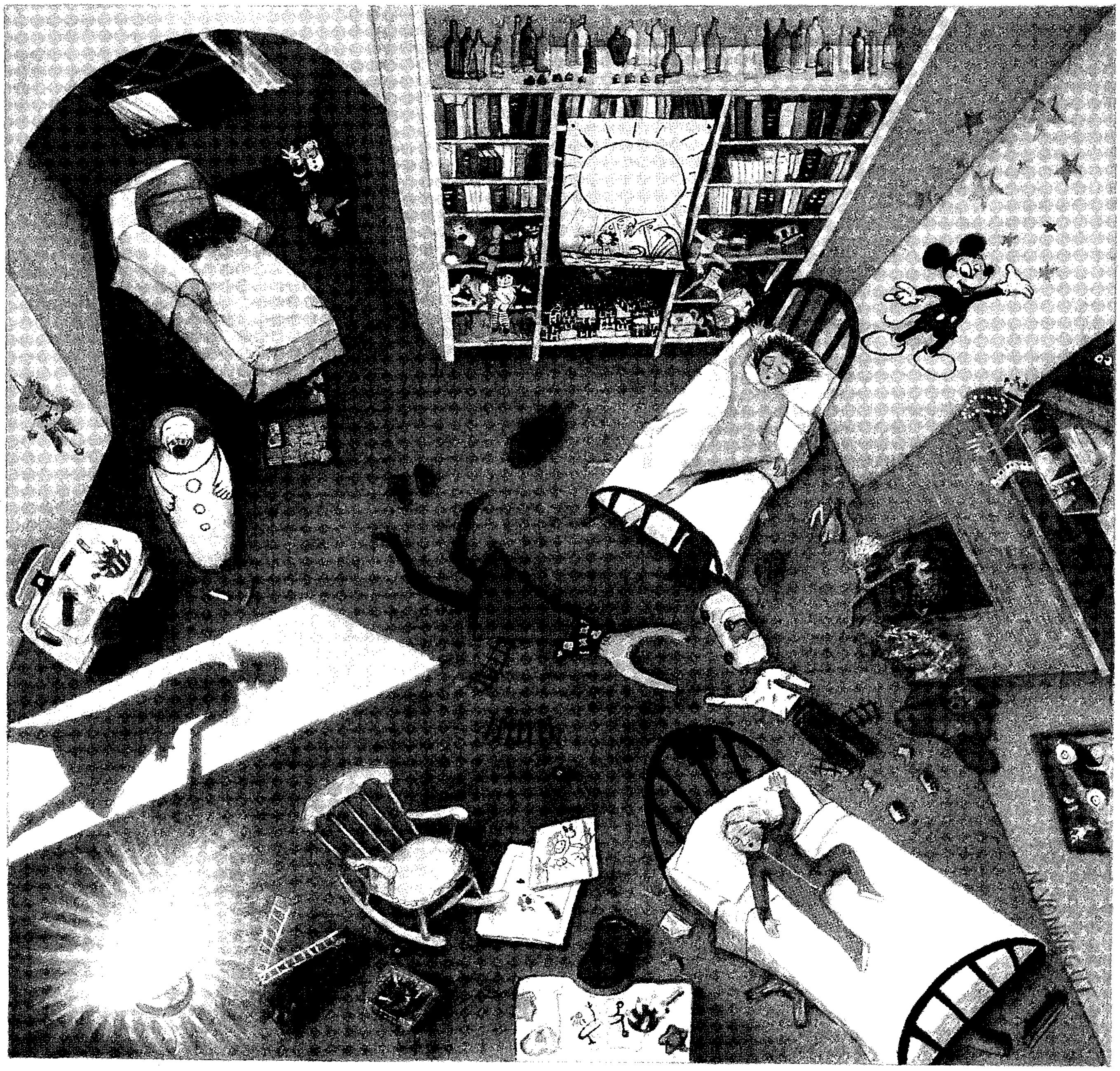
Long before she stopped nursing, our daughter began acquiring *things*, many of them. The baby swing and the toy chest nudged the steamer trunks to the living room; a rocking chair replaced the last of its immobile colleagues. Her father and I bought a craft table so small that even carefully folded onto the matching stools we cannot coax our humped knees under its surface, now covered with sedimentary layers of adhesives and pigment. Before our daughter was three, she became enamored of Play-Doh, paste, poster paint, acrylic paint, glitter paint, oil paint, and Magic Markers. In short order, she acquired a glue gun; a glutinous, slippery, shiny gunk called Gak; Silly Putty; plaster of Paris; a machine that employs centrifugal force to splatter paint onto whirling cards; and a little brother—all of which arrivals encouraged the exchange of the mauve Oriental rug for a nearly wall-to-wall Stainmaster in a practical shade of dark blue.

Three years old, the carpet already wears its history. People who do not have children will give other people's children the sort of gifts their parents never buy, hence the popularity of bachelor uncles and courtesy aunts. Hence the glue gun and Gak. I drew the line at hot paraffin and hid the candlemaking kit, but, still, we paint and draw and mold and glue a lot—every day—and the more ambitious art projects do leave incidental impressions, stains, gouges. The rocking chair, I noticed recently, has been decorated with stickers and wobbly stripes of red and green around its arms and along the sides of its seat. It has older scars, of course; this rocker was in my childhood bedroom, and before that in my mother's. It has been glued and clamped, screwed and reglued by both my grandfather and my husband.

THE baby swing and the changing table, the crib and the walker are gone now, and each of the children has what is called a "youth" bed—smaller than a twin and closer to the floor. At five, our daughter is nearly too large for hers, but she's not ready to part with it. She hated to lose its predecessor, the crib, which we tactfully dismantled long before her brother's arrival, and only after we had put together her new little bed, with its shiny, red enamelled frame. We were careful to allow a full six months between the older child's moving out of the crib and the younger's moving in, careful that she never felt that she was forced to pass her bed directly along to another baby, but still our little girl wept when its polished wood head and foot and sides were carried from the room. Our son, for whom a crib was never better than an inadequately disguised cage, clapped at its second dismantling. He bounced on his version of the little bed, the same as his sister's but enamelled in blue.

Between the two little beds is the fireplace, whose flue is permanently shut, bricked up. The empty hearth has become a cubbyhole for an appropriately combustible-looking collection of junked toys: Barbie's broken refrigerator and her hot-pink range, a fire engine without its wheels, stray blocks, twisted and retwisted pipe cleaners, ravaged coloring books—all trash they cannot bear to discard. Together the objects make a blaze and jumble of color. Presiding disconsolately over the heap is the piñata from the most recent birthday party. A papier-mâché donkey with a festive hide and mane of orange and red and pink tissue paper, he was torn in two, vivisected by preschool greed wielding a broom. Now his head and tail both face out into the bedroom, so we are spared the dispiriting sight of his hollow middle. The mantelpiece above bears another rubble of objects, most of which our daughter hopes to keep out of her brother's reach: stickers, costume jewelry, a collection of tiny plastic horses.

Propped in the center of the mantel is an old wall hanging: a wood bas-relief of a tavern, including kitchen, dining hall, and bedrooms. Every object and gesture is carved and painted with cunning attention: dinner plates the size of dimes, a butter churn with a three-inch dash, washtubs, rolling pin, crucifix, table and benches, a clock whose hands read a quarter past five, hats hanging on hooks by the door, an accordion, two flowerpots, shotgun, and stove. My grandfather, who was apprenticed in 1904 to a cabinetmaker in Berlin (he was fourteen), acquired the hanging, which was made in the Black Forest. It used to contain a working music box, and just under the eaves is a brass key that no longer turns. The hidden mechanism, with its rolling, metal-toothed platen and minuscule comb of



NANNY VONNEGUT/COURTESY OF FORUM GALLERY tines, once played, my grandfather told me, a feeble polka.

As a child, I spent many hours staring at the tavern's tiny furnishings, at once seduced and bewildered by the very nature of bas-relief, neither flat picture nor free sculpture, a doll house enduring an uneasy metamorphosis from three dimensions to two. Before we had children, I moved the tavern from closet to basement to guest room and back to closet, never knowing what to do with it until our children showed me.

"Take it down! I want to look at it up close!" one of them will say. The request is never more avid than when the children are ill, and I can remember exactly how fever enhanced the little row of frying pans hung over the stove, gilded the flowers painted on cupboard doors the size of my thumbnail. I can remember, in the glaze and glitter of their feverish eyes, but I can no longer *feel* the luxury of benign childhood illness, of recoveries uncompromised by meetings, deadlines, chores.

From experience, I know that if my children are not sufficiently entertained they will escape the confines of bed; and I supply toys, rescind the TV laws, and bring them from their room into ours. In our family, sick children inevitably end up in the parental bed, an indulgence intended to compensate for an ailment serious enough to mandate bed rest: a way of separating horizontal day from night, a chance to command the empire of our tall, king-size bed, at whose foot I prop the tavern.

"Why," our daughter asks, as I asked my grandfather, "are the flames right on the pot?" A tiny black kettle hangs in the kitchen over kindling the size of matchsticks, its underside painted with tongues of red and yellow and orange.

"Because," I say, not finishing the answer any more than my grandfather did—in 1904 they didn't have cellophane for fake fires.

WET MORNING, CLAREVILLE ROAD

Under the morning greys of rain the roses
are washed, glowing faces, and in near gardens
the limp washing hangs with no hope
although all the slate roofs down Westfield Road
shine like polished chrome. Up early to make
a little door that opens out, a word passage
into the rain-filled air among the flowers
and the morning traffic—as if the words
themselves could offer light, could make
some sense of that muddle in which the heart
flutters. Dark green the overarching
ascension of trees; walled gardens
where scarlet roses are exploding; yellow
the cylinders of chimney pots; luminous
and edgy the fretwork clouds: how things
fall into place from a window, as if the given
were a pattern with precise meanings
and could console us for the loss
of signs, and spires, and words like *consecration*,
or could speak at least a little comfort
after sounding brass, and after
the manic world where men go on
killing as usual, bringing lovely cities down
to rubble, dust. The town of minarets and bells
becomes a cry in the snipered street, hunger
a dog that howls all night, and out
among the hills not too far north of here
the consonantal guns and drums keep beating
and repeating their one word. But here
in our apparent peace there's nothing
but a wet hiss of traffic on glistening road,
the stark green shock of a privet hedge,
that bloodthirsty nude sunburst of roses.

If I went under the rain to smell the roses,
I would inhale your arms, the warm breath
between your breasts, the whole heady
exhalation of you moving by me on the stairs.
Is it because we can't hold onto something
as evanescent as a smell that, when it
finds us again, it brings the whole body
back into our ready arms: the steady undoing
of straps and buttons, cotton and silk things

NOT only my own childhood is recapitulated in our children's bedroom; their father's is here as well. Along the top shelf of the bookcase are twenty-nine bottles and nine glass inkwells, anywhere from ninety to a hundred and twenty years old. Clear, clouded, blue, green, amber—old enough so that none are actually colorless, so that even plain glass has acquired a purple tint. Though they were dug from old dumps, none are chipped or broken. There are hundreds of these bottles in our house, most packed away, all of them together representing thousands of hours of my husband's childhood.

Time continues to possess and confound and mystify us. It passes, of course, with a relentlessness familiar to all grownups, but never more than when compared to the clock of childhood, with its burden of hours to be wasted, a burden compounded by the as yet misperceived vagaries of hour hands and minute hands and calendars. Questions of measurement include: When will it be Christmas, summer, Friday, my birthday? Dinner? Young children float on an ocean unmarked by adult dates and appointments. Our daughter stands at the front door, dressed to go, whole hours before a birthday party. Our son looks out the window of the

drifting from our hot skin, a white shirt
forgetting itself awhile and flying
beyond its own down-to-earth expectations?
Shaken by a slight breeze, lace curtains
let light filter through to the room
I only imagine, where a bowl of roses burns
on a low glass table by the window:
blue mutations agitate air; sea salt
stings the tip of the tongue:
and no ghosts but ourselves to stand
in that early play of light and its solutions
which may contain for the moment
time and all its grazing shades. The room
a flowering branch of details: this
brimming glass, this swimming mirror,
these peaches, this open book, this cracked
black-and-white Spode bowl, these trials of love.

When that space—with its shades of love
and its impossible colors—fades
to the wet morning outside my window,
I only see the tree in the back garden
bowed down as it is every summer
under a rich crop of bitter little apples.
But my brother makes the garden grow
once more, coaxing its flowers into the sun
like those unhappy patients he'll listen to
all day for their broken stories, crying out with joy
at the first start of the begonia
into pale pink blossom. *I thought it was dead,*
he says without thinking, *and now*
just look at it! He can talk of little else—
learning as he is not to grieve
but go on—and will, when he gets himself
out of bed this morning, fill the house
with his good will, looking forward
to whatever happens, ironing his shirts
to the sound of the soprano he loves
singing "Tosca": when he thinks it's ready,
he'll test the hot iron as our mother would
with a spittled finger, and sing along as he listens
for the startled hiss that steams away
and, like a quick kiss, vanishes.

—EAMON GRENNAN

car, uttering "Are we there yet?" while still in our neighborhood. He cannot imagine that his parents treasure long car rides for their enforced enclosure, their near-idleness.

But childhood has many hours that must be filled. Is this one reason for our curiously misguided idealization of it? Waiting for important phone calls, we read professional journals while riding our exercise bikes. Dinner cooks slowly in the Crock-Pot while I fold the laundry, catch the lead stories of the six-thirty news, and police the crayon situation (she takes his reds, he breaks her blues). How different from the time when we drooped over bannisters, loitered limply at the back door, moaned, "But I have nothing to do. I'm so, so, so bored."

While our children wait to be older, imagining perhaps that grownup busyness is a measure of happiness and freedom, they are amused by Barbies and blocks and crayons and tiny cars, by trains, stuffed animals, picture books, dress-up clothes, beads, stencils, pipe cleaners, fire engines, balls, balloons, putty, puzzles, and puppets. All of these, in every state of disrepair (Madison Avenue Barbie reduced to a gruesome paraplegic, her hair matted into dreadlocks), form a tide that washes over the surfaces of their room. Beds, tables, chairs—nothing is uncovered, clutter is fierce, the room infrequently tidy. Still, "What a great room!" people say when they enter for the first time. The walls are decorated with Babar and Mickey Mouse and Muppets, in determined contrast to my own room as a child, with its one print, entitled "In Disgrace," of a little girl, face to the wall, blue sash drooping, socks rumpled, sad-eyed puppy at her scuffed heels. Flanking this print were two framed prayers by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. Of a troubling and final nature, each seemed to indicate that I was not long for this world.

As a small child, I was high-spirited, careless, clumsy, and often in "Coventry," my British grandparents' way of saying "the doghouse." Even without the solace of canine sympathy, I knew myself to be that painted, rumple-socked girl sprung to life. Who needed to tell me that I was my mother's disgrace? She was pregnant and unmarried the summer after she graduated from high school, and every look she gave me was one of regret. My mother's parents reared me to be all that she was not—responsible and studious and steady—and they decorated my childhood bedroom to exclude the whimsy revealed in photographs of my mother's room, with its three doll houses and trunks of dress-up clothes. Before I could read, I had a desk, a bookcase, and edifying messages on the wall—none of which helped to keep me out of the trouble I was bound to find.

Our daughter was still in the crib when I bought the giant Mickey Mouse decal, cut him out of the vast sheet of adhesive-backed vinyl, cut out each one of the rain of yellow stars that falls around him, placed them all with care as she watched from behind the polished bars of her crib. By design, the room is filled with happy nonsense, and yet our daughter seems already the studious child I was meant to be. "I'm going to my office," she says of her own art desk, a red-and-yellow-and-blue-and-green one, whose surface includes a light box for tracing. Sometimes she traces pictures, more often words, sentences. Her long hair falls around her while she works, hunched over in concentration, the light under her carefully moving pencil shining out through the dark strands. "What are you doing?" I ask. "My work," she says.

We redress the hurts of our own childhoods; we do it even with abundant evidence that our efforts rarely matter. Last Christmas, in the guise of Santa Claus, I bought our son an inflatable clown. Three feet tall and weighted with sand at his feet, he is the type of long-suffering companion who, when hit, pops back up. Having struggled under the seen-and-not-heard rule that hopes to cure little girls of untoward zest, I found the clown irresistible. But the only time our little boy pushes him over is to use him as an inflatable log, a kind of bench. "What's the matter with him?" he asks me. "He won't lie down."

"Here," I say. "If you hit him, he pops up again." I demonstrate. Our son gives the clown a casual smack, shrugs. Every once in a while, passing through the children's room, I push the clown over, watch him rise cheerfully, inviting another assault.

I FIND that I come into our children's room when I am alone, anxious. Our daughter is in kindergarten, our son is in nursery school, the house is quiet. I put off work to sit in the chaise or lie on one of the beds that are so short I must curl, knees drawn up, to fit. Sometimes I tidy the room. If I can locate all the pieces of a board game, find both the left and the right of Barbie's pair of pink plastic pumps, my worries are somehow lessened by imposing order on chaos, even this happy chaos—by my ability to find something we assumed was lost. I especially like to complete the puzzles, whose pieces are always scattered. Their father's mother gave each of the children a wooden one, featuring a child of his or her own gender standing undressed before a closet. The little boy has interchangeable trousers and shirts and pairs of shoes, seven of each, and the little girl can try on skirts, jackets, dresses, and shoes.

For many months, the red cowboy boots have been missing from among the puzzle girl's accessories. One morning, I find the piece lodged under a baseboard in our room, and feel a tiny leap of joy: the redemption of recovery. I go to put the piece away, so eager to press it into the empty boot-shaped space that as I cross the threshold from our room to the children's I almost miss what I am walking over. At my feet is a life-size version of the puzzle I am hoping to complete.

At five, our daughter is just beginning to understand herself as a creature of infinite possibility. We, her parents, each year let go of things we will likely never do, another trip we may not make, another sport we're too old to take up. But our child is just learning of her choices, all of which she relishes, lingers over. She asks to be wakened early enough to consider every option of what to wear to school, and on the floor of the room she lays out possible outfits: shoes, tights, dresses, pants, shirts, socks. She does it for herself and for her little brother, and, after they are dressed in the outfits they have picked, and are gone, the rejected clothes remain.

The room I see is this: their sleeping selves are laid out, pajamas on his bed, nightgown on hers. Among table legs, train tracks, and Barbie gear, his blue trousers and race-car shirt pose solemnly. The shirt's long sleeve reaches toward that of his sister's pink pullover, carefully tucked into the waist of a black skirt decorated all over with pink flowers. A second-choice skirt—she prefers the longer, purple one—it floats above the legs of red tights, legs splayed crazily as if in flight from this room, as if to remind us, and the attentive boy evoked by the posture of those empty dark-blue trousers, that she is leaping forward into life. Soon she will not live in the bedroom next to ours. Soon she and her brother will have separate rooms, later separate homes and separate lives. This room will, perhaps, become the library we once imagined, the chaise recovered in a sober leather or corduroy.

But for now the children are here, their room next to ours, his bed only nine steps from the one in which we sleep, hers fourteen. ♦

PORTFOLIO BY
DOMINIQUE NABOKOV

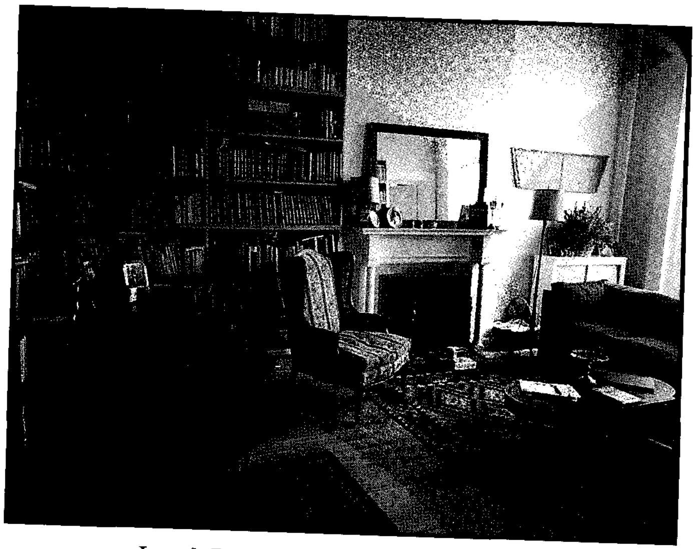
LIVING ROOMS

IN the final analysis, living rooms are a lot like underwear: while their function is mostly personal, you always wonder what other people's look like, and you worry about what yours might look like to somebody else. A living room's semipublic privateness needs special treatment. If you are going to clean one room in your apartment, you clean the living room. The best of your furniture goes in the living room; beat-up stuff ends up somewhere else. The funny thing is, even in New York, where space is at a premium, people don't really live in their living rooms. They hang out in the kitchen or on their bed or in the room where they keep their books and television and their most comfortable chair. They put the living room together and then leave it alone, and drop by when they have company.

Someone came to my apartment for the first time recently, and she looked around my living room and then said, "I never knew any of this about you." By "this" she meant that I collect green bowls and tin globes; that I inherited my grandmother's lion's-head table; that I was willing to spend a fortune on Art Deco leather armchairs but bought a cheapish sisal rug; that I am not formal, and not especially tidy, and am too lazy or too indecisive to hang my pictures; that I like neutral colors, Martinis, punk music, and wood. What bigger conclusions about me these led her to I don't know, but, having seen my living room, she indeed knew me much better than she'd known me before. Once in a while, someone turns out to have a living room that is a complete surprise—the slob who loves chintz, the easygoing guy with the harshly austere furnishings, the friend you thought was just like you but turns out to surround herself with things you hate. This means that either they had bossy decorators or there is a lot about them you really don't know. Draw your own conclusions about these eighteen living rooms.

—SUSAN ORLEAN

Jerome Robbins, choreographer, Upper East Side



Joseph Brodsky, poet, Brooklyn Heights

The Reverend Al Sharpton, political activist, Brooklyn

Mario Buatta, decorator, Upper East Side

Robin Byrd, porn-TV hostess, Fire Island

Representative Susan Molinari, Staten Island

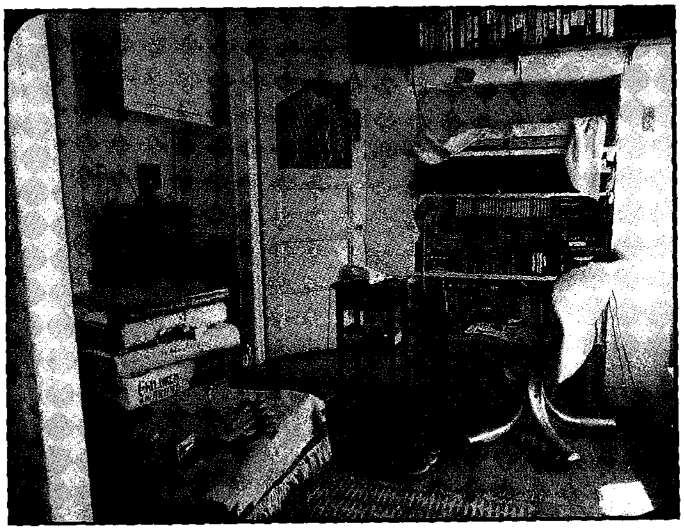
Susan Sontag, writer, Chelsea

Françoise Gilot, writer, Upper West Side

Curtis Sliwa, Guardian Angels founder, Chelsea

Diane von Fürstenberg, designer, Upper East Side

Fernando Sanchez, designer, West Fifty-seventh Street



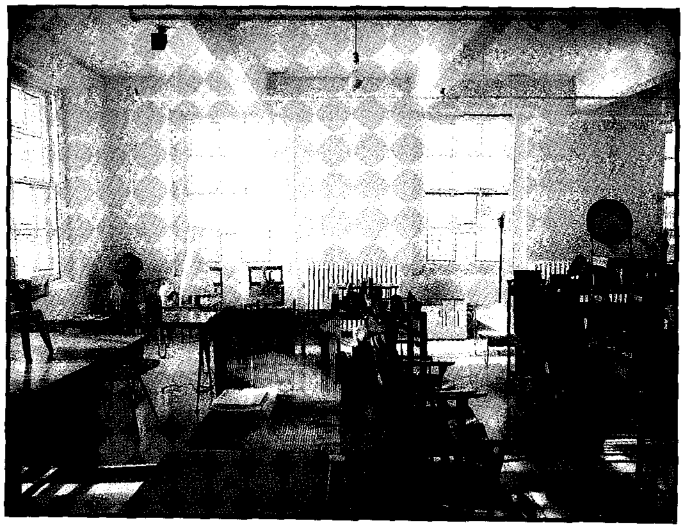
Allen Ginsberg, poet, East Village

Jimmy Breslin, journalist, Upper West Side

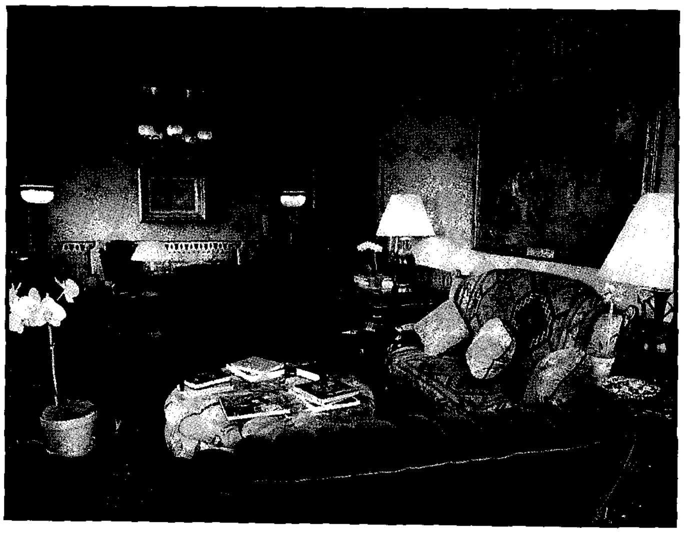
Louise Bourgeois, artist, Chelsea

John Epperson (Lypsinka), drag performer, the Garment District

Ed Koch, former mayor, Greenwich Village



Robert Wilson, director, Tribeca



Pierre Bergé, businessman, The Pierre

MODERN LIFE

TIME IS EVERYTHING

So what does it mean if you have none?

BY LOUIS BEGLEY

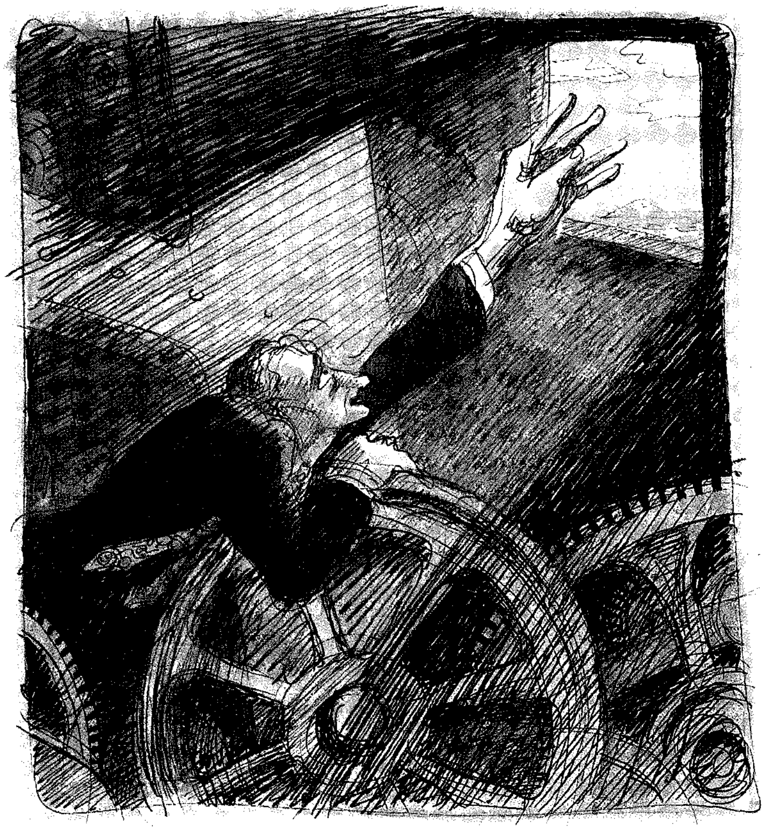
THE Japan *Times* has been around for ninety-nine years; it claims to publish "All the news without fear or favor," and it is not to be sneezed at. After the *International Herald Tribune*, it's my favorite newspaper: twenty-four pages is the right length; the print doesn't come off on your fingers, so you don't need to wear gloves when you read it over breakfast in bed; and the soft news is somewhere in the back, where it belongs, along with Miss Manners, sumo-wrestling results, and the crossword puzzle. I was glad, therefore, on my last visit to Japan, to find a copy of the newspaper in a neat plastic envelope—the same kind that the hotel pool attendant hands you, bowing from the waist, for your wet bathing trunks—when I opened the door to let the waitress wheel in my usual Japanese breakfast: fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice, one perfect green apple cut into perfect sections, one brioche, and one tea without lemon or milk. Returning to bed, I pressed the control buttons on the night-table console. The curtains whirred open, revealing windows made of opaque glass that lets in bleary daylight but keeps out Tokyo's jumbled skyline. The front page carried news of Bosnia and Croatia. I was about to skip all the way to world weather when a little Swissair ad in the upper-left-hand corner, in the same place where the New York *Times* makes its claims about all the news that's fit to print, arrested my attention: it had in it a splash of red as bright as blood. There were two other items in color on the page, but they were subdued—photographs of the flower of the week (Brazil vervain) and of a large group of children belonging to the Paper Crane Society of Hiroshima. The children were laying folded-paper cranes at the monument in memory of the twenty thousand Korean conscripted laborers who perished in the atom-bomb attack on Hiroshima but who hadn't received the same recognition as the victims who were ethnic Japanese. Since cranes are a symbol of longevity, the children's offering was or wasn't ironic, depending on one's point of view. But only the words printed in that eye-catching red mattered to me: they were "Time is everything."

This slogan—for the moment, I couldn't have cared less whether it was old hat already in Shakespeare's time, so that he had Edgar exclaim, instead, "Ripeness is all," or whether Swissair had distilled it one week earlier from the collective unconscious of the makers of Patek Philippe watches—was all new to me. I was shaken by the truth it revealed, and reminded, once more, that writing is a magic occupation. Here is why. Though I read the newspaper every morning, I don't do the crossword puzzle, I skip the sports and the funnies, and I eat breakfast with the efficiency of a vacuum cleaner sucking in dust. It was, therefore, not at all unrealistic to expect that, fifteen minutes after I removed the Japan *Times* from its wrapper, I would, just as I had intended, sit down at the desk in that very hotel room and begin to write about the leitmotiv of my existence. How I repeat over and over, like a monstrous caged parrot: I have no time. Much as I would love to do it, I have no time. Please try me in the spring (depending on the time of year, substitute for spring another season that's six months away), because just now I have no time. But if Swissair is as right as in my bones I feel it must be—and why did it take an ad, intended to lure some travelling salesman to the Swissair ticket office, to open my eyes—it follows that, since it is quite true that I have no time, it must follow that I have absolutely nothing.

Since 1959, when I became a lawyer, I have been trained to divide time into tenths of an hour, and to note on a sheet of paper, at the top of which I write the word "TIME," each such unit that I devote to work on a client's matter, to reading that continues my legal education, to charitable work my firm has taken on, to administrative chores, and to that nebulous activity that is said to have increased in importance as I have grown older, called "development of clients." The hundreds and thousands of hours spent on clients' affairs have been multiplied by dollar figures, which have also increased, and have been billed. That's what we sell: each lawyer's time, cut up into little segments of his life. The sums of those other hours have a different worth, measured mysteriously, like the contending destinies of Troy and Achaea when Zeus weighed them in his golden scales.

In my younger days, I kept copies of these daily records, and occasionally, out of curiosity, added the hours up, hoping to recall where those weekdays and scattered Saturdays and Sundays had gone. Then a central computer took over from the old ladies who used to enter my scribblings in the firm's ledger and calculate their value, clickety-clack, on an adding machine, and I no longer need to bother. Without my asking, a few days after the end of each month the computer sends me a printout of what I have accomplished during that month and throughout the year so far. It is as though a farmer took care to keep his milk cow informed about the gallons of its production, except that the quality of the milk given by a cow that's well fed and in good health is even, which cannot be asserted of the vigor of a lawyer's thought or imagination. And that uncertainty feeds an angst the cow will never know: were those hours used well, so that the fee the client paid was honestly earned? And were there enough such hours to justify what the firm pays me? As to the latter question, one receives guidance: for each year there is a number of those hours which one should have put in and turned to gold. That number is called a target, but nobody is fooled; it is, in fact, a minimum. As one grows older, the minimum is reduced. That's nice, provided clients still want one to work for them. What should one's course of action be if they don't? What must one think of the reality that the shrinking of the minimum is supposed to reflect? Perhaps one has earned the right to work less. More likely, it is the leering judgment that the old fellow's energy and stamina aren't what they used to be, just as his hair has become thin and his teeth brittle. These statistics of profit and shame are not published to all of one's colleagues, but there are those who know whether you are a prize cow worth every cubic inch of your comfortable warm stall and every bale of hay you eat.

In reality, I have imagined rather than known this angst. Work has come to me in abundance, and I have been diligent about it. And so, for many years, I thought I had no time because, having worked whatever number of hours in the day I happened to work (there were no targets I knew about then), I used every waking minute of those that remained to worry over my children and money, to wipe finger marks off kitchen and bathroom doors, to complain that my shirts had been badly ironed, and to satisfy my curiosity about women. I played no games of chance or skill, and did not watch television except at moments of national crisis. When my Japanese friends would ask me, as is their wont, what my hobby was, I was able to reply, truthfully, "Sleeping."



It was the day between the party and the opening which made me think I had succeeded in getting a bit part in a remake of "Modern Times."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDWARD SOREL

A new era opened, and I learned what it really means to have no time, when I began, quite unexpectedly, just as one may step off the curb without noticing, to write novels. As I would neither stop working as a lawyer nor work less hard at it—I like the practice of law, and, what's worse, I am as stubborn as a mule and very superstitious, quite unable to make changes in how I live, because a change may bring bad luck, one that might take the form of discovering I had become blocked at the very moment I had dared to say I was a writer and not a lawyer—I confined my writing to those weekends when I don't have to do the legal work that turns into those statistics. Therefore, I have had to give up all the after-working-hours occupations listed above, to the considerable relief of my family. But I also used to do other things I haven't mentioned, which were so pleasant: long walks to the bottom of Manhattan to eat dim sum, visits to museums unrelated to the verification of a detail in a painting I have stuck into a paragraph on some page, reading books that weren't written by an acquaintance who wants a blurb for the dust jacket, or just idly looking at what Goethe called "the laughing Nature."

I have not allowed myself much of a pause between novels. What would have happened if I had? Would I have forgotten how to write? Indeed, the need to continue to write has become fairly strong, a point of honor: rather like the panic of a novice swimmer doing the crawl, who thinks that he will sink unless he keeps thrashing about with his arms and legs, faster and faster. A novel one has finally given to a publisher is like a hornet when you are having lunch in the garden. It keeps coming at you. First, there is the literary editor's irritating silence, followed by comments that may be no less infuriating in their opacity, then the nagging questions of the copy editor, and finally the proofs, the reading of which you can actually manage at night Monday through Thursday as your eyes pop out of your head and you realize you have sacrificed to Literature your only acknowledged hobby, Sleep.

But that is not all. If a novel has been translated into a language you know, there is the consequent torment of correcting the translation. Few people, I believe, compare their text page by page with the translation. Instead, you read the translation as though on automatic pilot until you encounter the sudden bump that makes you glad you have kept your seat belt on. You ask yourself whether you could have possibly written such a thing in English. Nine out of ten times you haven't; it's your translator who has succumbed to the siren song of false etymologies. Thus, not so long ago, I came across some of my personages in a translation who were standing on the sidewalk, outside a New York City hotel, in the hope that someone would bring them a lemonade with a good deal of water in it. How strange, I said to myself, and checked the original. It turned out that in English the poor chumps were waiting for their stretch limo. Meanwhile, I was grinding my teeth and giving up, once more, a walk on the beach with my grandson, and the lawyer inside me was counting the tenths of hours I had lost.

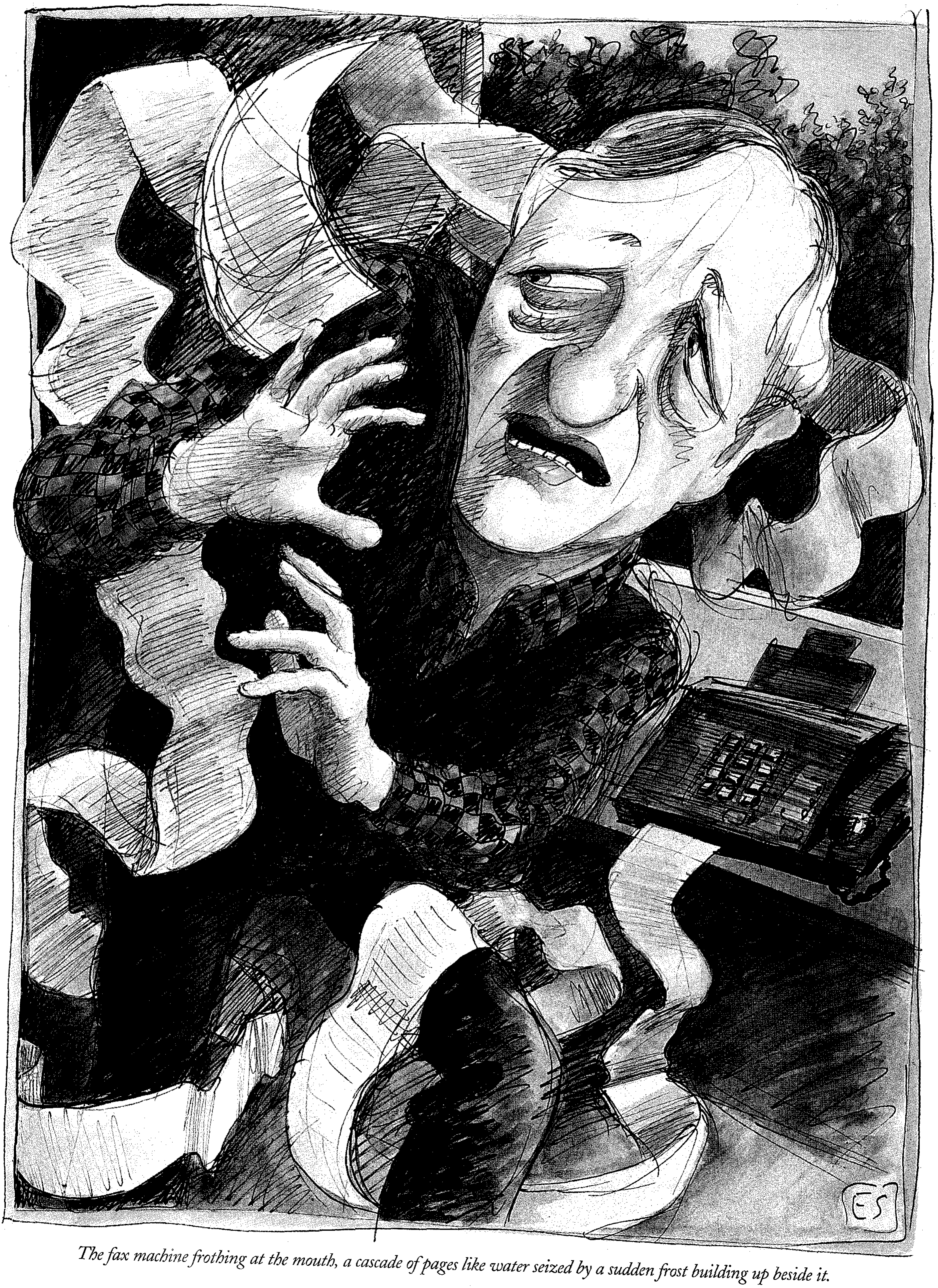
VERY recently, I took an entire month of vacation. No such thing had happened to me in twelve years. The purpose was to be in the country at the same time as my grandchildren, and to finish a novel that, because of work I had to do on a legal case, I had not touched during many months of weekends. But my work on that case was not quite finished, either. One would think I could have postponed my vacation. That was not a good solution, because the grandchildren also have a schedule, and the following month they would not be there. I decided I would do it all at the same time: supervise the work on the legal case, be in my grandchildren's presence, and write the last third of the novel. How was this to be accomplished? Through superior organization and efficient use of technology. At the end of each afternoon, my secretary would send by Express Mail all the documents received that day, and by fax a report on the day's events, telephone calls, and E-mail, as well as all those papers that were less than ten pages long and required an immediate return fax or telephone call. The next morning, at nine o'clock, when I went to get the newspaper and breakfast scones, I would also pick up the packages my secretary had sent, and, if I had got up at six and sat down to work immediately, I would have already spent three hours with my book.

And so it went. The vacuum-cleaner breakfast to the accompaniment of highlights of the New York *Times* while my penknife slashed through the yards of tape with which the office mailroom had reinforced the Express Mail boxes (I discovered that I would receive at least two each day; one always underestimates the reproductive power of the Xerox machine). Then telephone calls, usually to voice-mail boxes, the habit of answering one's telephone having fallen into desuetude; the grandchildren arriving from the house on the other side of a stand of scrub oak asking for my wife, the only person those very sensible little persons really want to see; and, meanwhile, the fax machine frothing at the mouth, a cascade of pages like water seized by a sudden frost building up beside it on my worktable. At the end of my afternoon, I would return to the post office to fire off an Express Mail salvo of my own: correspondence I had read, letters I had drafted for my secretary to put on office letterhead and send out, pieces of paper I had signed. And there was nothing wrong with any of that, because two-thirds of happiness is to know that the people you love are nearby in great harmony; the missing third—doing things with them instead of remaining at your desk as that faintly ridiculous figure at the end of a long corridor, its eyes fixed on some page, moving words from one place to another—can be dispensed with when there is no other way out.

As the end of the month approached, a certain sense of inebriation signalled to me that I was finishing the book. The legal case was reaching a favorable conclusion, too; all it needed was two hours on the telephone every morning, because that was the early afternoon in Europe, and a round of faxes to be sent in the evening, when Japan is waking up and Europe is still asleep. On the other hand, two intruders made their appearance: translations I had not thought would possibly be ready that month. There was also my granddaughter's sixth birthday—for which we had planned a water-bomb fight, a potato-sack race, and a spider-web treasure hunt—and the opening of a show of my older son's paintings, after which we were giving a large dinner. It was the day between the birthday party and the opening of the show which made me think I had succeeded in getting a bit part in a remake of "Modern Times." The fax machine ran out of paper in the middle of receiving a seventy-page fax. I put in another roll, only to find that the fax was being resent from page 1 onward, so that I would have to keep on adding paper over and over unless the sender of the document could somehow be tamed; my computer refused to save a chapter I had just corrected for the new novel; an unannounced four-party transatlantic telephone conference took over the telephone, so that I couldn't call to ask whoever was sending the fax for a truce. Then, like a Boeing 747 taking off from an airport where the air is thin and the engines have to make an extra effort, the crew that takes care of the garden arrived with lawnmowers, hedge cutters, leaf blowers, and edging machines. And the grandchildren came in to introduce me to the multicolored, perfect turtle they had just found under a pile of rotting leaves.

Feeding the fax machine. Waiting with dread for the beeps that are like an F on a final exam and that tell you the transmission has been broken—why? How could I have screwed it up? Pleading with the kindly manager of the grocery store, who finally gives you two packages of his own paper for your computer printer, because, otherwise, you would spend three-quarters of an hour (seven-tenths is how I would record it) driving to the nearest village where such things can be bought, and back. Wondering why my laptop computer is willing to number consecutively the pages of one chapter but skips certain pages in all others, and obtaining a consultation about that problem, which is really of no importance, with the motherly person in my office who programmed the computer for me. Unlocking the fraud-detection device in the car telephone and then locking it. Giving directions to a courier bringing a document I need, who calls me on his mobile telephone but doesn't speak English and can't read the map. All these devices and systems are intended to expand the time during which I can work. But time cannot be expanded: there are precisely twenty-four hours in the day, minus the hours during which I would like to sleep, even though in Tokyo salarymen are slurping in their noon noodles, about to rush to the office from which they will send me a fax. Instead, time is filled, to the point of bursting.

When each segment of time has been taken up and accounted for, where do you find time for friendship? Certainly not at the dinner to which nice Mr. Warlock-Williams invited you and other guests to waste their time and yours, and yet you and your reluctant wife will go to it, because, after all, one can't always behave like a savage. And what of your old mother, the grandchildren, those grown-ups who were once the children on the fastening of whose snowshoes you spent the hours that now seem so happy, and your wife and her crystalline laughter? Which tenths of which hour are to be theirs? Many years ago, I succeeded in teaching a dog who lived with me in Paris to heel so well that I did not need to put him on the leash when he went with me each day from my apartment on the Boulevard du Montparnasse to my office in the Place du Palais-Bourbon. It was an achievement of equal scope, I used to think, to have made my wonderful doctor, my dentist, and my barber at last understand that I cannot be kept waiting, because I have no time. Training is never perfect; occasionally something goes wrong. Somebody's front-tooth crown won't fit, and has to be stomped into shape in the back room, out of the patient's sight; the man who had the appointment before me was late and has asked to have his eyebrows curled or his head shaved. The receptionist comes out on tiptoe and gives me the bad news: would I mind waiting? She assures me that it won't be more than ten minutes (one-tenth of an hour). I look furious, but in my heart I rejoice and wish I could wait longer, because the time I will spend in that waiting room is time I didn't know I had, time that belongs to me, that time which is everything. ♦



The fax machine frothing at the mouth, a cascade of pages like water seized by a sudden frost building up beside it.

THE WEEKEND HOUSE

DESIGNS FOR ESCAPE

The architect was delighted when friends asked for his advice on designing their rustic idyll—until their fantasies clashed.

BY WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI

LAST summer, I was in Montreal on a brief visit from Philadelphia, where I now live. I had some small business to conduct there, but the visit was mainly an opportunity to look up old friends. I called Danièle, whom I hadn't seen in a couple of years, and we arranged to have dinner together that evening. She promised to take me to a new bistro, and I looked forward to it: Montreal is no longer the premier city of Canada—that role now belongs to Toronto—and it seemed a bit shabbier than I remembered, but it still has more than its share of exceptional restaurants.

"Shall we meet there?" I asked.

"No," she said, "you must come by the apartment first." She told me excitedly that she wanted to show me the plans of a weekend house that she and Luc were going to build. Danièle is not an architectural neophyte: she had been married to an architect for twenty years. True, the marriage had ended in divorce—Luc, her current beau, is in public relations—and I didn't remember her having expressed strong ideas about architecture in the past. But I knew her ex well; he had been a student of mine. You can't live with someone for twenty years and not be influenced by what that person does. At least, that's what my wife tells me. So I was curious to see what sort of house Danièle had come up with.

She and Luc and I sat around the kitchen table, and they showed me snapshots of the site, which was in the Laurentian Mountains, a popular recreation area north of Montreal. The Laurentians are an old volcanic range, and the worn, rounded mountains recall the Berkshires or the Catskills, but they're wilder, with fewer signs of human habitation. Though I prefer pastoral scenery—rolling fields and gentle hills—to mountains, I had to admit that Danièle and Luc's land was beautiful: a wooded hilltop with long views in several directions.

I sensed that Danièle was a bit nervous about showing me the drawings of the house. That was understandable. She knew that I taught architecture and wrote about domestic design. She and her husband had helped my wife and me when we built our own house in the country. Now it was her turn. Building a house for yourself is exciting, because of the feeling of possibility that a new house carries, and because creating shelter is a basic human urge, whether or not you are an architect. It is the same urge that makes children erect playhouses out of blankets and cardboard boxes, and build sandcastles at the beach. But building a house—a real house—is also scary, and not just because of the money involved or the fear of making mistakes. A new house is revealing. It tells you—and everyone else—"This is how I live. This is what's important to me. This is what I dream about." I think that's why home magazines—from *Ladies' Home Journal* to *Architectural Digest*—have always been popular. It's not just a matter of looking for decorating hints. Rather, houses intrigue us because they tell us so much about their owners.

Danièle spread out the sketches, which had been prepared by a local architect. Siting is always a crucial decision for a country house. I could see that the house would stand almost at the top of the hill, and so would be approached from below, as, ideally, it should be; walking down to a house is always unpleasant. The hilltop had obviously been chosen for the views it offered, but it also meant that the house would be some distance from the road, and would require a short walk through the trees to arrive at the front door.

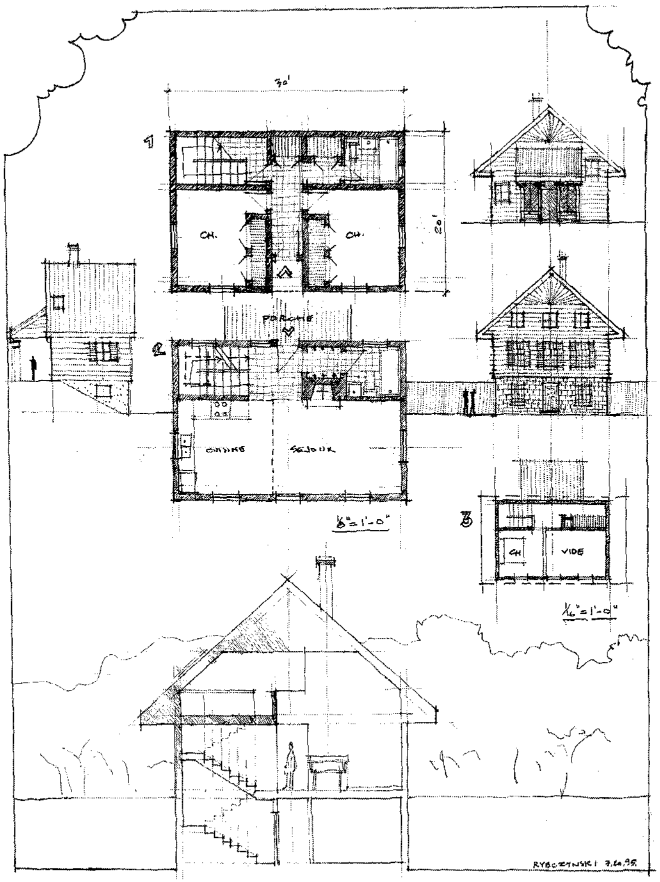
The floor layout of the house was simple enough. Because of the sloping ground, the lower level, containing two bedrooms and a bathroom, would be dug partly into the ground. The floor above, which could be entered directly from the upper part of the slope, would hold the living areas, and there would be a sleeping loft in a sort of tower. Danièle explained that they wanted to be able to rent a room to skiers during the winter season, which was why the lower level would have its own front door and could be separated from the rest of the house. The exterior would be mainly wood, with several sloping roofs. It was hard to put your finger on the architectural style of the house. It wasn't going to have the curved eaves and dormer windows of the traditional Breton style, which is still popular with many Québécois. Although the functional-looking window frames and rather spare exterior couldn't be called old-fashioned, neither did they seem aggressively modern. I suppose most people would use the term "contemporary."

The three of us got into a long discussion about how best to rearrange one of the bathrooms. I pointed out that if they moved the door to the other side and changed the site of the toilet, they could gain space and improve the circulation in the kitchen area as well. Not very inspirational stuff. I could see that Luc and Danièle expected something more. I had unconsciously fallen into a bad habit of architecture teachers: if you really don't know what to say about a project, focus on some practical improvement, no matter how small. How often had I sat on design juries at the university, taking part in interminable discussions about fire exits or corridor widths, when the real problem was something else entirely.

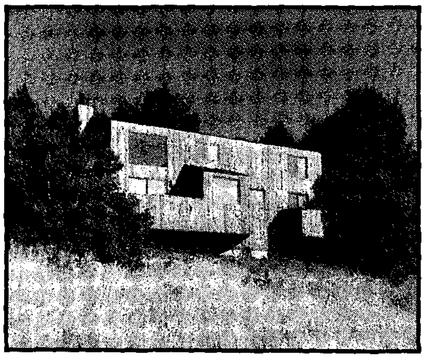
It wasn't that Danièle and Luc's house looked boring—quite the opposite. "The architect told us that she worked hard to make each side of the house different," Danièle explained. Differences there certainly were, and, I thought, that was part of the problem. The little house was trying too hard to be unusual and interesting. The perimeter was animated by indentations and protrusions—architectural bumps and grinds. Instead of a single sheltering gable, the roof was broken up into several slopes. This is a favorite device of commercial homebuilders and is obviously a crowd pleaser, though the roof has always seemed to me an odd thing to spend your money on. The complexity of the roof was mirrored by the intricacy of the fenestration: there were half a dozen different window shapes and sizes. The modest house was hardly in a league with Frank Gehry and Peter Eisenman, but it *was* busy.

I realized that I had to say something more substantive about the house, but I wasn't sure where to start. I think that small, inexpensive houses like Danièle and Luc's should be as simple as possible. This is partly a question of economics; complexity costs money, after all, and I would rather see a restricted budget devoted to better-quality materials than to architectural bravura. But it is also an aesthetic issue. I like plain farmhouses and straightforward country buildings. They usually look good in the landscape, and they have a kind of directness and honesty that appeals to me. True, they are often really just boxes, but boxes can be given charm through relatively inexpensive details of construction, such as bay windows, trellises, and even shutters.

A simple way to dress up a house is to add a porch. Porches, with their columns, balustrades, and ornamental fretwork, are pleasant to look at, and they are also pleasant places to sit. They are like rooms, but without walls, and they encourage the sort of lazy inactivity that has always seemed to me to be the essence of leisure. I noticed that Danièle's house didn't have any covered outdoor area, and I suggested that they might consider adding a screened porch. This would also be a useful feature, since the Laurentian summers are notorious for their mosquitoes and blackflies.



It's hard to comment on—let alone judge—other people's fantasies. Still, I couldn't resist making my own sketches for Danièle and Luc's house.



The Shingle-Style Watts Sherman house (top) and the Charles Moore design that became the architectural equivalent of a leisure suit.

TOP TO BOTTOM: WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI; ROBERTO SCHEZEN/ESTO; WAYNE ANDREWS/ESTO

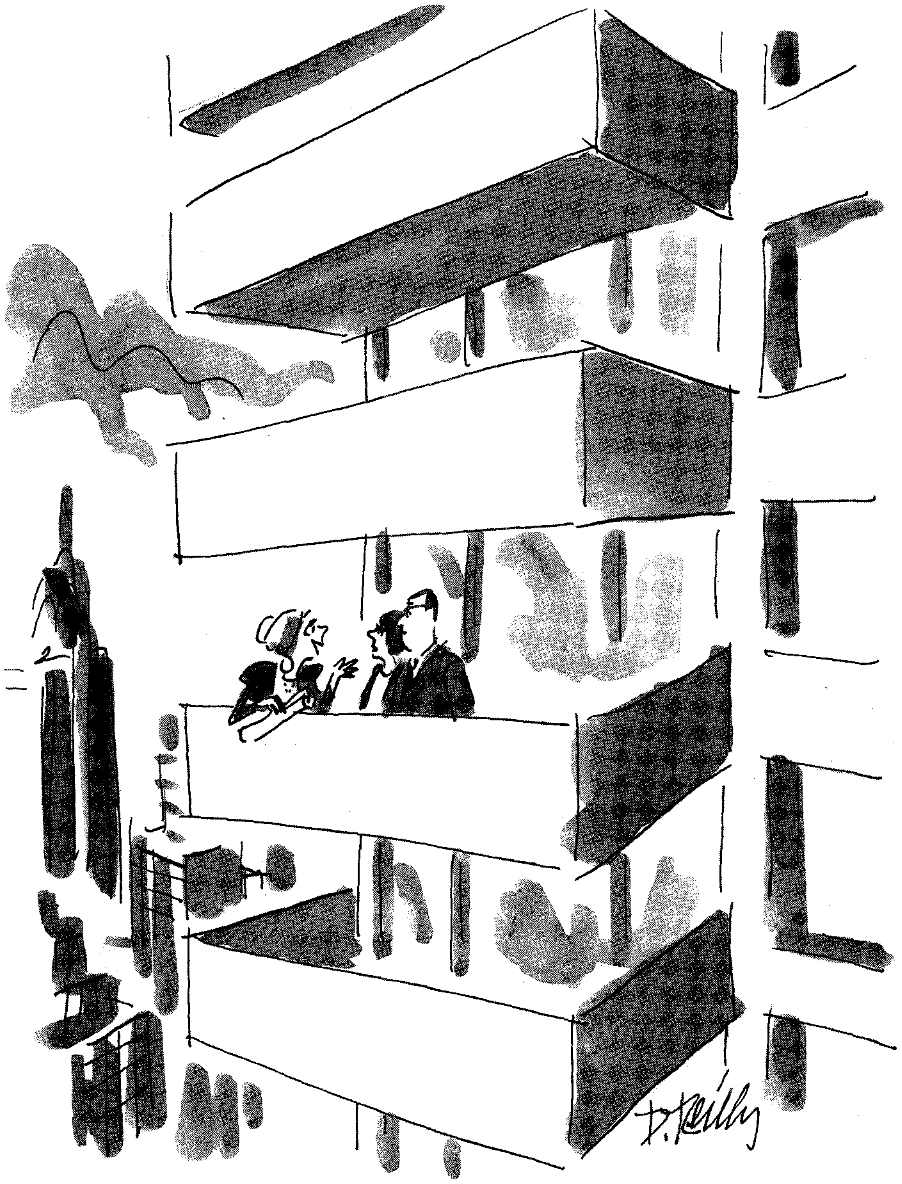
"No," Luc said. "A porch won't do at all. Porches and balconies are something for a city house. We want our house to look rustic."

That was interesting. I had always associated porches and verandas with country houses. Evidently, for Danièle and Luc they were an urban feature. (Indeed, Montreal row houses traditionally do have verandas.) A little later, they asked me what sort of material I thought should be used to finish the inside walls. I said that I liked plaster wallboard—that it was inexpensive, you could paint it whatever color you wanted, and, furthermore, it was fire-resistant—an important consideration when you're building miles from a fire station. They looked skeptical and said that they had been thinking, rather, of wood. "We want this to be a different sort of place, where we can get away from our city life," Luc said.

A lot of architecture has to do with images—and imaginings. For one person, getting away means a broad porch with a rocking chair and a slowly turning ceiling fan. The image may be the result of a remembered family photograph, or a painting, or even the experience of a real porch somewhere. That particular porch image has haunted me for years—I think I saw it first in a magazine ad for whiskey. And one of the side benefits of watching the film "Out of Africa" is the beautiful porch of Karen Blixen's plantation house in Kenya, with Mozart's Clarinet Concerto playing on a windup gramophone. Alas, for Luc a porch was just a utilitarian appendage. Moreover, the image it conjured up for him was not rural but urban. I also had the impression that he considered porches to be old-fashioned—or maybe just places for old people.

I have always liked farmhouse kitchens—large, comfortable rooms where you can cook and eat and socialize around the kitchen table. (That's probably a remembered image, too.) The plans of Danièle and Luc's house, on the other hand, showed a small efficiency kitchen, with a separate dining area. It was an arrangement that reminded me—but, obviously, not them—of a city apartment. I realized that their idea of getting away from it all was more dynamic than mine: not a cabin in the woods but a striking ski chalet on a hilltop, with different views from each room, beamed ceilings, knotty-pine walls, and a dramatic fireplace. I was starting to understand why the house looked the way it did. It was not a question of money—theirs was hardly an extravagant house. It reflected a different idea of rusticity.

GETTING away from it all has a long history; almost as soon as people started living in towns, they felt the need to build country retreats. In ancient times, it was the common practice of wealthy Romans to decamp periodically to country estates. “You should take the first opportunity yourself to leave the din, the futile bustle, and the useless occupations of the city,” Pliny the Younger wrote in a letter to a friend. Pliny owned two country retreats, one a large agricultural estate in present-day Umbria, the other his famous seaside villa in Latium, of which he wrote, “There I do most of my writing, and, instead of the land I lack, I work to cultivate myself.” The sentiment—re-creation—is recognizably modern. Modern-sounding, too, is the Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti’s advice that “if the villa is not distant, but close by a gate of the city, it will make it easier and more convenient to flit, with wife and children, between town and villa, whenever desirable.”



“A million two does seem a bit heavy for a one-bedroom at first, but this unit has the best feng-shui in the building.”

In nineteenth-century America, such flitting usually meant taking a steamboat or a train. Summer houses sprang up along the Hudson River, in New York, and the Schuylkill, in Philadelphia, or in places like Newport, Rhode Island. In Newport you’ll find many early examples of the Shingle Style, one of the high accomplishments of American architecture. The Watts Sherman house, designed by the great architect H. H. Richardson in 1874, is irregular in composition, and the granite, the half-timbering, and the wooden shingles on the exterior give it the picturesque appearance that is a trademark of the Shingle Style. Still, it is provided with a drawing room, a dining room, and a library, and so is not really a radical departure from a typical middle-class suburban or urban house of the period.

Although rich New Yorkers commuted to their villas in Newport, these were summer houses, not weekend houses. Indeed, the full weekend—a two-day holiday at the end of the workweek—didn’t appear until the twentieth century. It arrived first in Britain, as a one-and-a-half-day holiday, and by the early nineteen-hundreds more and more Americans were also working “short Saturdays.” Eventually, the five-day workweek became commonplace, and the combination of the two-day holiday and the automobile produced the vast proliferation of weekend retreats that we know today.

The weekend cottage continues the time-tested tradition of the summer getaway house, but with a crucial difference. Instead of being used for an entire season, it is chiefly a two-day retreat. Hence it is less a place of long and lazy summers than of sometimes frantic spurts of recreation. Perhaps that’s why the architecture is often intentionally unusual, with dramatic fireplaces, tall spaces, and cantilevered decks. That was what Luc meant when he said he wanted “a different sort of place.” It was probably the late architect Charles Moore who started the trend toward spatial excitement. In the mid-nineteen-sixties he designed a series of weekend houses, chiefly in Northern California, with deceptively simple exteriors and with interiors that were a cross between

ENGLISH VISIT

When we came to the country place of Jack Morpurgo
it had a moat, by God, a dry moat.
Jack hosted us in through a massive portal, groaning
on black hinges big as battleships.
Our breath was white ice in the rugless hall:
stones scooped and softened by centuries of shoes—
boot, buskin, slipper, sandal, patten, clog.
"In here," said Jack, opening a panelled door
on relative warmth where a fire cavorted over
the torso of a forest giant. Who hauled it in?
Not the white hands of bookish Jack Morpurgo
or his wife, the actress Kay, who knelt on the hearth
to stir a hissing jug with a hot poker.

I crooked my neck at the ceiling in disbelief:
hundreds of carven squares and each unique.
Awestruck I lay on my back, the better to look.
"Others have done the same before," said Jack.
"This was a king's hunting lodge; fourteen
something, we think. Some bloody Henry or other."
Firelight flattered the ancient patterning . . .
As I stared at the unsigned masterwork above,
Kay set a steaming mug beside my hand;
But what was this chill as if from underground?
A royal spectre passed in vair and velvet
and kicked me lightly, taking me for his hound.

—Virginia Hamilton Adair

barns and jungle gyms. Although designed with considerable sophistication, these houses could also be described as the architectural equivalent of the then popular leisure suit. That is, they were intended to put people instantaneously in a different mood and also to tell the world that here the owner was off duty. Moore's approach was influential, and versions of his houses sprang up in vacation spots from Colorado to Vermont.

Like many people, I spend my weekends in a worn pair of shorts and an old polo shirt. Perhaps that's why my ideal of a weekend house is more like a farmhouse—commodious rather than exciting, a place to kick your shoes off and relax, a place that can get scuffed up and still feel comfortable. Sculptural staircases and eye-popping fireplaces are not a priority. Now, I don't want to give the impression that I think weekend houses should be Thoreau-style shacks, without conveniences, or even without luxuries. I would have no objection to a Miele range and a Sub-Zero refrigerator in my country kitchen. After all, that has always been the paradoxical thing about second homes: we want to feel that we're roughing it, but we want our comforts, too. Pliny schlepped around his villa in an old tunic, but he had a proper warmed swimming bath as well as a banqueting hall. When Richardson designed the Watts Sherman house in Newport, he made it look rustic, but he also incorporated a novel amenity: central heating. Even Thoreau, whose cabin at Walden Pond didn't have a kitchen (in warm weather, he cooked outside over an open fire), regularly walked to nearby Concord to have dinner at friends' houses.

I remember once visiting an Adirondack camp on Lower Saranac Lake. It was one of many in the area that had been built by rich New Yorkers during the Gilded Age. The house itself was typical—a charming, rough-hewn log building with a massive granite fireplace, columns made of peeled and polished tree trunks, and spartan Arts-and-Crafts-style furniture. Here was rusticity laid on with a trowel. When this particular camp, Knollwood, was built, in 1899, it consisted of six cottages, a so-called casino (a social gathering place, not a gambling hall), and a boathouse, all designed by William Coulter, the architect of some of the buildings at Sagamore, the Vanderbilts' famous camp. Although the ample cottages contained several bedrooms, there were originally only small service kitchens. That was because the six families and their guests had their meals prepared and served to them in the casino, which did have a large kitchen. You went boating on the lake and hiking in the forest, but that was no reason you couldn't have a proper dinner, prepared by your New York cook. The Knollwood boathouse contains canoes and handmade Adirondack guide boats but also, on the upper floor, a huge billiard table. I don't think I would require a billiard table in my ideal weekend house, but, on the other hand, I wouldn't do without a compact-disk player. Getting away from it all has always involved compromise as well as a certain degree of make-believe.

It's hard to comment on—let alone judge—other people's fantasies. If Danièle and Luc wanted a house in the country, well, they would have to make their own compromises. I don't think I was really much help to my friends; our ideas of weekend houses were probably just too different. Anyway, we all went out to dinner, the atmosphere in the bistro was convivial, the food was excellent, and everyone had a good time. A week later, when I got home to Philadelphia, I just couldn't resist making some sketches of my own, trying to accommodate all their requirements. I drew a little cottage, twenty feet by thirty feet, clapboard above and with a stone base—for the two bedrooms—below. The house was sheltered by a broad gable roof (to accommodate the sleeping loft). The loft looked down on the main living space, a large family room with a kitchen at one end and a sitting area at the other. In the center of the room, a Franklin stove served for warming cold toes and cold plates. A pair of glazed doors opened onto a large screened porch. It was only a sketch, just to keep my hand in, I told myself. But if I shut my eyes I could almost hear the strains of the Clarinet Concerto in the woods. ◆

FAMILY LIFE

COMING HOME AGAIN

What a son remembers best, when all that is left are memories.

BY CHANG-RAE LEE

WHEN my mother began using the electronic pump that fed her liquids and medication, we moved her to the family room. The bedroom she shared with my father was upstairs, and it was impossible to carry the machine up and down all day and night. The pump itself was attached to a metal stand on casters, and she pulled it along wherever she went. From anywhere in the house, you could hear the sound of the wheels clicking out a steady time over the grout lines of the slate-tiled foyer, her main thoroughfare to the bathroom and the kitchen. Sometimes you would hear her halt after only a few steps, to catch her breath or steady her balance, and whatever you were doing was instantly suspended by a pall of silence.

I was usually in the kitchen, preparing lunch or dinner, poised over the butcher block with her favorite chef's knife in my hand and her old yellow apron slung around my neck. I'd be breathless in the sudden quiet, and, having ceased my mincing and chopping, would stare blankly at the brushed sheen of the blade. Eventually, she would clear her throat or call out to say she was fine, then begin to move again, starting her rhythmic *ka-jug;* and only then could I go on with my cooking, the world of our house turning once more, wheeling through the black.

I wasn't cooking for my mother but for the rest of us. When she first moved downstairs she was still eating, though scantily, more just to taste what we were having than from any genuine desire for food. The point was simply to sit together at the kitchen table and array ourselves like a family again. My mother would gently set herself down in her customary chair near the stove. I sat across from her, my father and sister to my left and right, and crammed in the center was all the food I had made—a spicy codfish stew, say, or a casserole of gingery beef, dishes that in my youth she had prepared for us a hundred times.

It had been ten years since we'd all lived together in the house, which at fifteen I had left to attend boarding school in New Hampshire. My mother would sometimes point this out, by speaking of our present time as being "just like before Exeter," which surprised me, given how proud she always was that I was a graduate of the school.

My going to such a place was part of my mother's not so secret plan to change my character, which she worried was becoming too much like hers. I was clever and able enough, but without outside pressure I was readily given to sloth and vanity. The famous school—which none of us knew the first thing about—would prove my mettle. She was right, of course, and while I was there I would falter more than a few times, academically and otherwise. But I never thought that my leaving home then would ever be a problem for her, a private quarrel she would have even as her life waned.

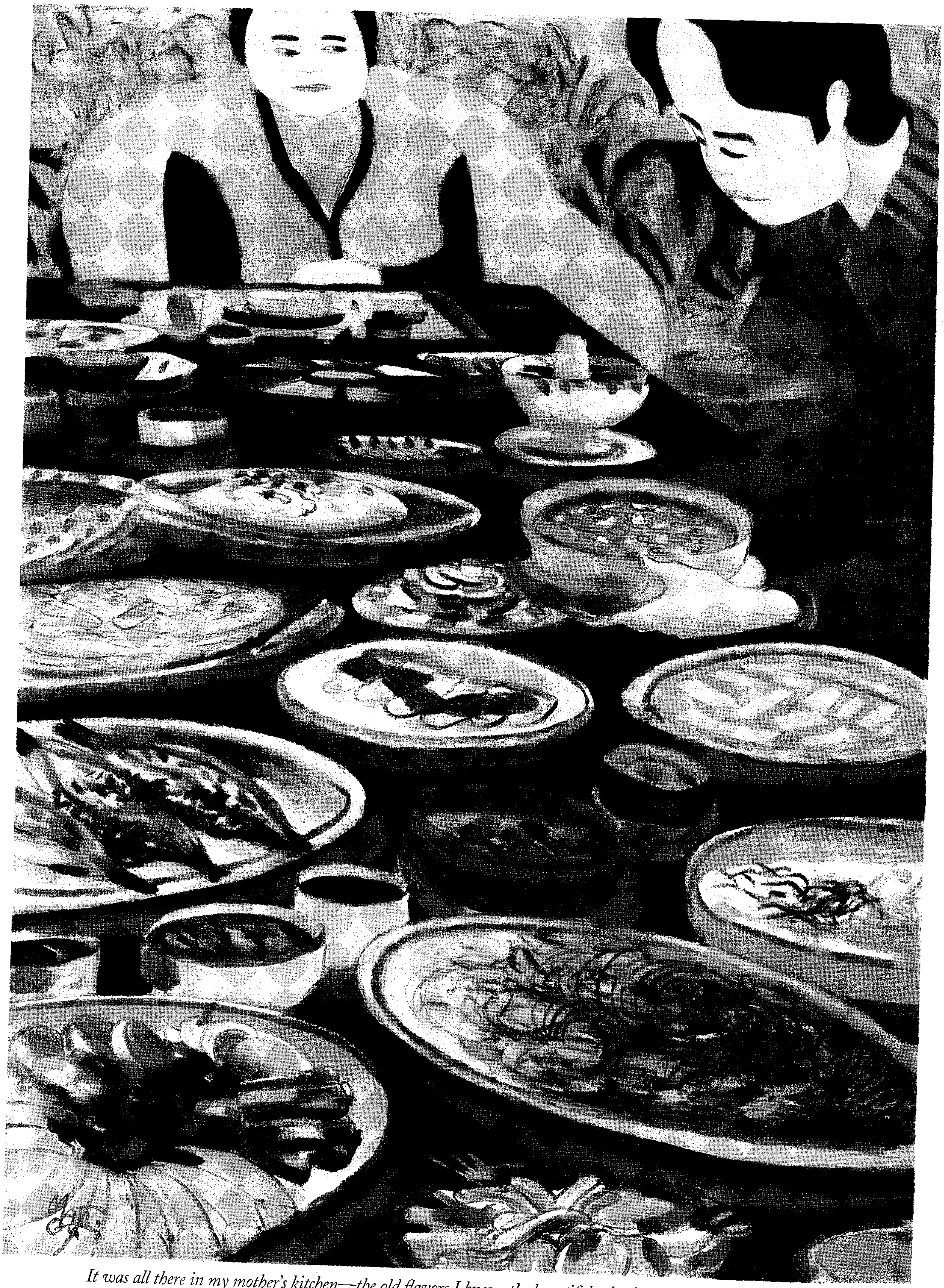
Now her house was full again. My sister had just resigned from her job in New York City, and my father, who typically saw his psychiatric patients until eight or nine in the evening, was appearing in the driveway at four-thirty. I had been living at home for nearly a year and was in the final push of work on what would prove a dismal failure of a novel. When I wasn't struggling over my prose, I kept occupied with the things she usually did—the daily errands, the grocery shopping, the vacuuming and the cleaning, and, of course, all the cooking.

When I was six or seven years old, I used to watch my mother as she prepared our favorite meals. It was one of my daily pleasures. She shooed me away in the beginning, telling me that the kitchen wasn't my place, and adding, in her half-proud, half-deprecating way, that her kind of work would only serve to weaken me. "Go out and play with your friends," she'd snap in Korean, "or better yet, do your reading and homework." She knew that I had already done both, and that as the evening approached there was no place to go save her small and tidy kitchen, from which the clatter of her mixing bowls and pans would ring through the house.

I would enter the kitchen quietly and stand beside her, my chin lodging upon the point of her hip. Peering through the crook of her arm, I beheld the movements of her hands. For *kalbi*, she would take up a butchered short rib in her narrow hand, the flinty bone shaped like a section of an airplane wing and deeply embedded in gristle and flesh, and with the point of her knife cut so that the bone fell away, though not completely, leaving it connected to the meat by the barest opaque layer of tendon. Then she methodically butterflied the flesh, cutting and unfolding, repeating the action until the meat lay out on her board, glistening and ready for seasoning. She scored it diagonally, then sifted sugar into the crevices with her pinched fingers, gently rubbing in the crystals. The sugar would tenderize as well as sweeten the meat. She did this with each rib, and then set them all aside in a large shallow bowl. She minced a half-dozen cloves of garlic, a stub of gingerroot, sliced up a few scallions, and spread it all over the meat. She wiped her hands and took out a bottle of sesame oil, and, after pausing for a moment, streamed the dark oil in two swift circles around the bowl. After adding a few splashes of soy sauce, she thrust her hands in and kneaded the flesh, careful not to dislodge the bones. I asked her why it mattered that they remain connected. "The meat needs the bone nearby," she said, "to borrow its richness." She wiped her hands clean of the marinade, except for her little finger, which she would flick with her tongue from time to time, because she knew that the flavor of a good dish developed not at once but in stages.

Whenever I cook, I find myself working just as she would, readying the ingre-

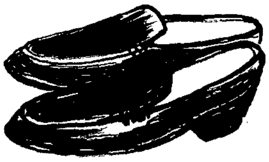
LORENZO MATTOTTI



It was all there in my mother's kitchen—the old flavors I knew, the beautiful salt, the sweet, the excellent taste.

dients—a mash of garlic, a julienne of red peppers, fantails of shrimp—and piling them in little mounds about the cutting surface. My mother never left me any recipes, but this is how I learned to make her food, each dish coming not from a list or a card but from the aromatic spread of a board.

I've always thought it was particularly cruel that the cancer was in her stomach, and that for a long time at the end she couldn't eat. The last meal I made for her was on New Year's Eve, 1990. My sister suggested that instead of a rib roast or a bird, or the usual overflow of Korean food, we make all sorts of finger dishes that our mother might fancy and pick at.



We set the meal out on the glass coffee table in the family room. I prepared a tray of smoked-salmon canapés, fried some Korean bean cakes, and made a few other dishes I thought she might enjoy. My sister supervised me, arranging the platters, and then with some pomp carried each dish in to our parents. Finally, I brought out a bottle of champagne in a bucket of ice. My mother had moved to the sofa and was sitting up, surveying the low table. "It looks pretty nice," she said. "I think I'm feeling hungry."

This made us all feel good, especially me, for I couldn't remember the last time she had felt any hunger or had eaten something I cooked. We began to eat. My mother picked up a piece of salmon toast and took a tiny corner in her mouth. She rolled it around for a moment and then pushed it out with the tip of her tongue, letting it fall back onto her plate. She swallowed hard, as if to quell a gag, then glanced up to see if we had noticed. Of course we all had. She attempted a bean cake, some cheese, and then a slice of fruit, but nothing was any use.

She nodded at me anyway, and said, "Oh, it's very good." But I was already feeling lost and I put down my plate abruptly, nearly shattering it on the thick glass. There was an ugly pause before my father asked me in a weary, gentle voice if anything was wrong, and I answered that it was nothing, it was the last night of a long year, and we were together, and I was simply relieved. At midnight, I poured out glasses of champagne, even one for my mother, who took a deep sip. Her manner grew playful and light, and I helped her shuffle to her mattress, and she lay down in the place where in a brief week she was dead.

MY mother could whip up most anything, but during our first years of living in this country we ate only Korean foods. At my haranguelike behest, my mother set herself to learning how to cook exotic American dishes. Luckily, a kind neighbor, Mrs. Churchill, a tall, florid young woman with flaxen hair, taught my mother her most trusted recipes. Mrs. Churchill's two young sons, palish, weepy boys with identical crewcuts, always accompanied her, and though I liked them well enough, I would slip away from them after a few minutes, for I knew that the real action would be in the kitchen, where their mother was playing guide. Mrs. Churchill hailed from the state of Maine, where the finest Swedish meatballs and tuna casserole and angel-food cake in America are made. She readily demonstrated certain techniques—how to layer wet sheets of pasta for a lasagna or whisk up a simple roux, for example. She often brought gift shoeboxes containing curious ingredients like dried oregano, instant yeast, and cream-of-mushroom soup. The two women, though at ease and jolly with each other, had difficulty communicating, and this was made worse by the often confusing terminology of Western cuisine ("corned beef," "devilled eggs"). Although I was just learning the language myself, I'd gladly play the interlocutor, jumping back and forth between their places at the counter, dipping my fingers into whatever sauce lay about.

I was an insistent child, and, being my mother's firstborn, much too prized. My mother could say no to me, and did often enough, but anyone who knew us—particularly my father and sister—could tell how much the denying pained her. And if I was overconscious of her indulgence even then, and suffered the rushing pangs of guilt that she could inflict upon me with the slightest wounded turn of her lip, I was too happily obtuse and venal to let her cease. She reminded me daily that I was her sole son, her reason for living, and that if she were to lose me, in either body or spirit, she wished that God would mercifully smite her, strike her down like a weak branch.

In the traditional fashion, she was the house accountant, the maid, the launderer, the disciplinarian, the driver, the secretary, and, of course, the cook. She was also my first basketball coach. In South Korea, where girls' high-school basketball is a popular spectator sport, she had been a star, the point guard for the national high-school team that once won the all-Asia championships. I learned this one Saturday during the summer, when I asked my father if he would go down to the school yard and shoot some baskets with me. I had just finished the fifth grade, and wanted desperately to make the middle-school team the coming fall. He called for my mother and sister to come along. When we arrived, my sister immediately ran off to the swings, and I recall being annoyed that my mother wasn't following her. I dribbled clumsily around the key, on the verge of losing control of the ball, and flung a flat shot that caromed wildly off the rim. The ball bounced to my father, who took a few not so graceful dribbles and made an easy layup. He dribbled out and then drove to the hoop for a layup on the other side. He rebounded his shot and passed the ball to my mother, who had been watching us from the foul line. She turned from the basket and began heading the other way.

"*Um-mah*," I cried at her, my exasperation already bubbling over, "the basket's over *here!*"

After a few steps she turned around, and from where the professional three-point line must be now, she effortlessly flipped the ball up in a two-handed set shot, its flight truer and higher than I'd witnessed from any boy or man. The ball arced cleanly into the hoop, stiffly popping the chain-link net. All afternoon, she rained in shot after shot, as my father and I scrambled after her.

When we got home from the playground, my mother showed me the photograph album of her team's championship run. For years, I kept it in my room, on the same shelf that housed the scrapbooks I made of basketball stars, with magazine clippings of slick players like Bubbles Hawkins and Pistol Pete and George (the Iceman) Gervin.

It puzzled me how much she considered her own history to be immaterial, and if she never patently diminished herself, she was able to finesse a kind of self-removal by speaking of my father whenever she could. She zealously recounted his excellence as a student in medical school and reminded me, each night before I started my homework, of how hard he drove himself in his work to make a life for us. She said that because of his Asian face and imperfect English, he was "working two times the American doctors." I knew that she was building him up, buttressing him with both genuine admiration and her own brand of anxious braggadocio, and that her overarching concern was that I might fail to see him as she wished me to—in the most dawning light, his pose steadfast and solitary.

In the year before I left for Exeter, I became weary of her oft-repeated accounts of my father's success. I was a teen-ager, and so ever inclined to be dismissive and bitter toward anything that had to do with family and home. Often enough, my mother was the object of my derision. Suddenly, her life seemed so small to me. She was there, and sometimes, I thought, *always* there, as if she were confined to the four walls of our house. I would even complain about her cooking. Mostly, though, I was getting more and more impatient with the difficulty she encountered in doing everyday things. I was afraid for her. One day, we got into a terrible argument when she asked me to call the bank, to question a discrepancy she had discovered in the monthly statement. I asked her why she couldn't call herself. I was stupid and brutal, and I knew exactly how to wound her.

"Whom do I talk to?" she said. She would mostly speak to me in Korean, and I would answer in English.

"The bank manager, who else?"

"What do I say?"

"Whatever you want to say."

"Don't speak to me like that!" she cried.

"It's just that you should be able to do it yourself," I said.

"You know how I feel about this!"

"Well, maybe then you should consider it *practice*," I answered lightly, using the Korean word to make sure she understood.

Her face blanched, and her neck suddenly became rigid, as if I were throttling her. She nearly struck me right then, but instead she bit her lip and ran upstairs. I followed her, pleading for forgiveness at her door. But it was the one time in our life that I couldn't convince her, melt her resolve with the blandishments of a spoiled son.

WHEN my mother was feeling strong enough, or was in particularly good spirits, she would roll her machine into the kitchen and sit at the table and watch me work. She wore pajamas day and night, mostly old pairs of mine.

She said, "I can't tell, what are you making?"

"*Mahn-doo* filling."

"You didn't salt the cabbage and squash."

"Was I supposed to?"

"Of course. Look, it's too wet. Now the skins will get soggy before you can fry them."

"What should I do?"

"It's too late. Maybe it'll be O.K. if you work quickly. Why didn't you ask me?"

"You were finally sleeping."

"You should have woken me."

"No way."

She sighed, as deeply as her weary lungs would allow.

"I don't know how you were going to make it without me."

"I don't know, either. I'll remember the salt next time."

"You better. And not too much."

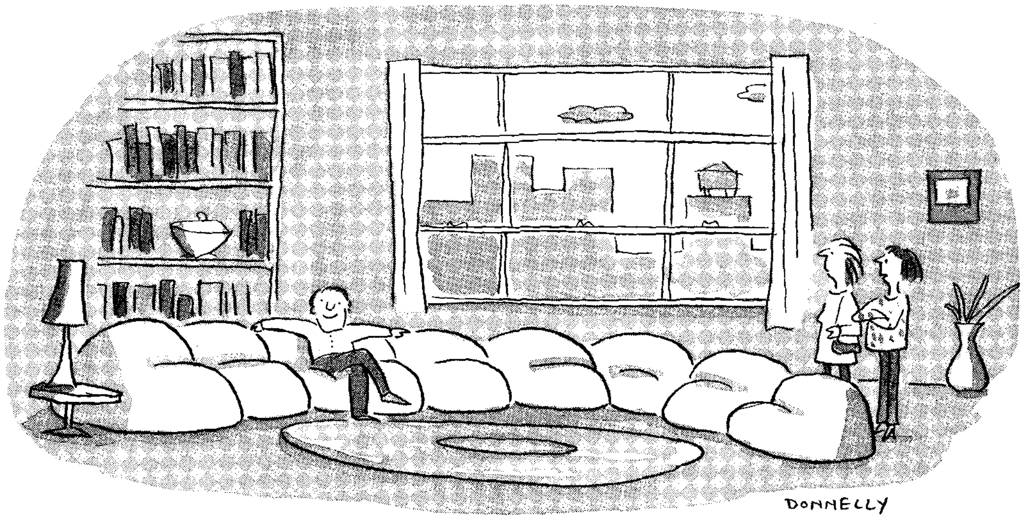
We often talked like this, our tone decidedly matter-of-fact, chin up, just this side of being able to bear it. Once, while inspecting a potato-fritter batter I was making, she asked me if she had ever done anything that I wished she hadn't done. I thought for a moment, and told her no. In the next breath, she wondered aloud if it was right of her to have let me go to Exeter, to live away from the house while I was so young. She tested the batter's thickness with her finger and called for more flour. Then she asked if, given a choice, I would go to Exeter again.

I wasn't sure what she was getting at, and I told her that I couldn't be certain, but probably, yes, I would. She snorted at this and said it was my leaving home that had once so troubled our relationship. "Remember how I had so much difficulty talking to you? Remember?"

She believed back then that I had found her more and more ignorant each time I came home. She said she never blamed me, for this was the way she knew it would be with my wonderful new education. Nothing I could say seemed to quell the notion. But I knew that the problem wasn't simply the *education;* the first time I saw her again after starting school, barely six weeks later, when she and my father visited me on Parents Day, she had already grown nervous and distant. After the usual campus events, we had gone to the motel where they were staying in a nearby town and sat on the beds in our room. She seemed to sneak looks at me, as though I might discover a horrible new truth if our eyes should meet.

My own secret feeling was that I had missed my parents greatly, my mother especially, and much more than I had anticipated. I couldn't tell them that these first weeks were a mere blur to me, that I felt completely overwhelmed by all the studies and my much brighter friends and the thousand irritating details of living alone, and that I had really learned nothing, save perhaps how to put on a necktie while sprinting to class. I felt as if I had plunged too deep into the world, which, to my great horror, was much larger than I had ever imagined.

I welcomed the lull of the motel room. My father and I had nearly dozed off when my mother jumped up excitedly, murmured how stupid she was, and hurried to the closet by the door. She pulled



"That's his favorite section."

out our old metal cooler and dragged it between the beds. She lifted the top and began unpacking plastic containers, and I thought she would never stop. One after the other they came out, each with a dish that travelled well—a salted stewed meat, rolls of Korean-style sushi. I opened a container of radish kimchi and suddenly the room bloomed with its odor, and I revelled in the very peculiar sensation (which perhaps only true kimchi lovers know) of simultaneously drooling and gagging as I breathed it all in. For the next few minutes, they watched me eat. I'm not certain that I was even hungry. But after weeks of pork parmigiana and chicken patties and wax beans, I suddenly realized that I had lost all the savor in my life. And it seemed I couldn't get enough of it back. I ate and I ate, so much and so fast that I actually went to the bathroom and vomited. I came out dizzy and sated with the phantom warmth of my binge.

And beneath the face of her worry, I thought, my mother was smiling.

From that day, my mother prepared a certain meal to welcome me home. It was always the same. Even as I rode the school's shuttle bus from Exeter to Logan airport, I could already see the exact arrangement of my mother's table.

I knew that we would eat in the kitchen, the table brimming with plates. There was the *kalbi*, of course, broiled or grilled depending on the season. Leaf lettuce, to wrap the meat with. Bowls of garlicky clam broth with miso and tofu and fresh spinach. Shavings of cod dusted in flour and then dipped in egg wash and fried. Glass noodles with onions and shiitake. Scallion-and-hot-pepper pancakes. Chilled steamed shrimp. Seasoned salads of bean sprouts, spinach, and white radish. Crispy squares of seaweed. Steamed rice with barley and red beans. Homemade kimchi. It was all there—the old flavors I knew, the beautiful salt, the sweet, the excellent taste.

After the meal, my father and I talked about school, but of course I could never say enough for it to make any sense. My father would often recall his high-school principal, who had gone to England to study the methods and traditions of the public schools, and regaled students with stories of the great Eton man. My mother sat with us, paring fruit, not saying a word but taking everything in. When it was time to go to bed, my father said good night first. I usually watched television until the early morning. My mother would sit with me for an hour or two, perhaps until she was accustomed to me again, and only then would she kiss me and head upstairs to sleep.

During the following days, it was always the cooking that started our conversations. She'd hold an inquest over the cold leftovers we ate at lunch, discussing each dish in terms of its balance of flavors or what might have been prepared differently. But mostly I begged her to leave the dishes alone. I wish I had paid more attention. After her death, when my father and I were the only ones left in the house, drifting through the rooms like ghosts, I sometimes tried to make that meal for him. Though it was too much for two, I made each dish anyway, taking as much care as I could. But nothing turned out quite right—not the color, not the smell. At the table, neither of us said much of anything. And we had to eat the food for days.

I remember washing rice in the kitchen one day, and my mother's saying in English, from her usual seat, "I made a big mistake."

"About Exeter?"

"Yes. I made a big mistake. You should be with us for that time. I should never let you go there."

"So why did you?" I said.

"Because I didn't know I was going to die."

I let her words pass. For the first time in her life, she was letting herself speak her full mind, so what else could I do?

"But you know what?" she spoke up. "It was better for you. If you stayed home, you would not like me so much now."

I suggested that maybe I would like her even more.

She shook her head. "Impossible."

Sometimes I still think about what she said, about having made a mistake. I would have left home for college, that was never in doubt, but those years I was away at boarding school grew more precious to her as her illness progressed. After many months of exhaustion and pain and the haze of the drugs, I thought that her mind was beginning to fade, for more and more it seemed that she was seeing me again as her fifteen-year-old boy, the one she had dropped off in New Hampshire on a cloudy September afternoon.

I remember the first person I met, another new student, named Zack, who walked to the welcome picnic with me. I had planned to eat with my parents—my mother had brought a coolerful of food even that first day—but I learned of the cookout and told her that I should probably go. I wanted to go, of course. I was excited, and no doubt fearful and nervous, and I must have thought I was only thinking ahead. She agreed wholeheartedly, saying I certainly should. I walked them to the car, and perhaps I hugged them, before saying goodbye. One day, after she died, my father told me what happened on the long drive home to Syracuse.

He was driving the car, looking straight ahead. Traffic was light on the Massachusetts Turnpike, and the sky was nearly dark. They had driven for more than two hours and had not yet spoken a word. He then heard a strange sound from her, a kind of muffled chewing noise, as if something inside her were grinding its way out.

"So, what's the matter?" he said, trying to keep an edge to his voice.

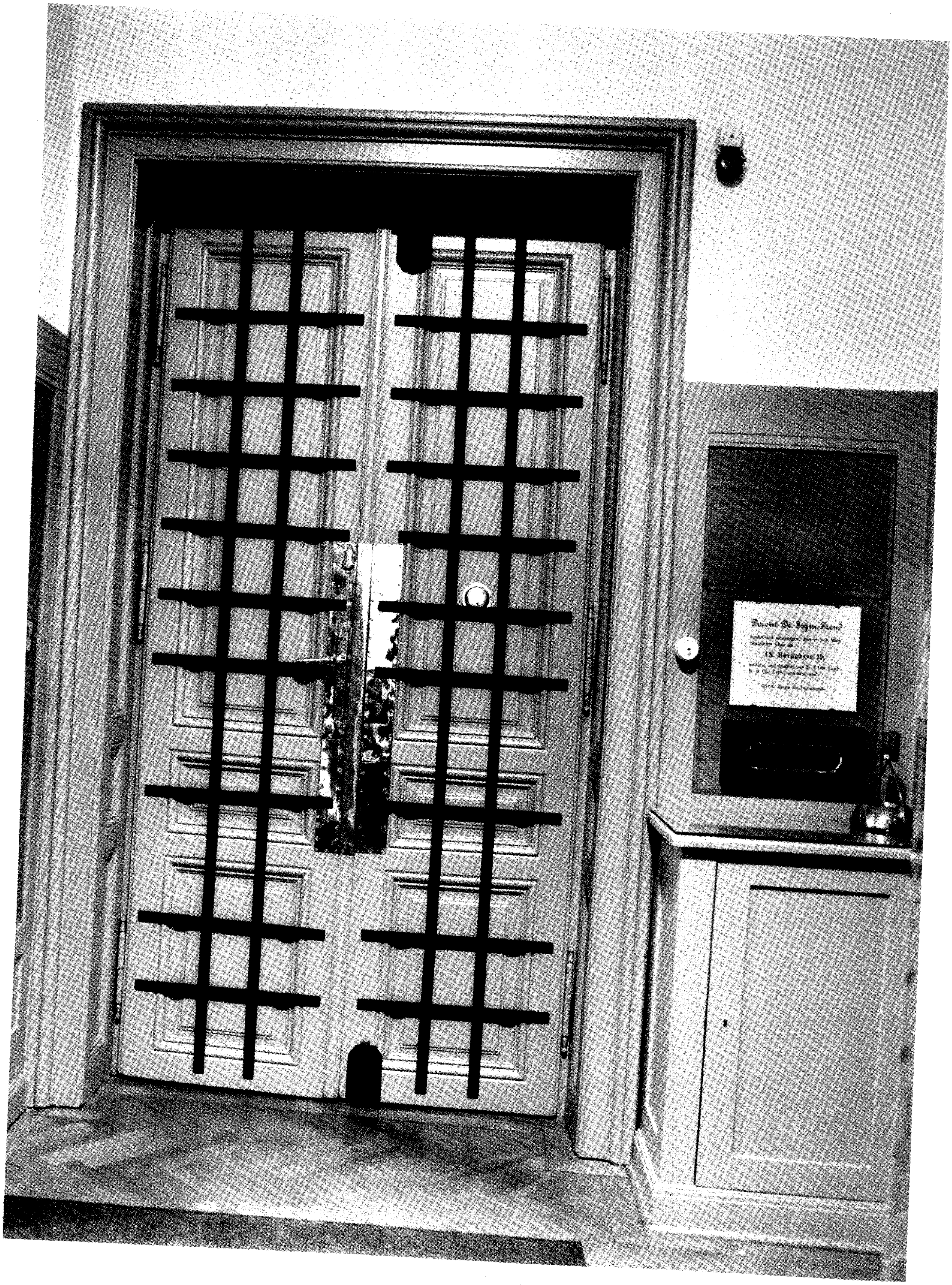
She looked at him with her ashen face and she burst into tears. He began to cry himself, and pulled the car over onto the narrow shoulder of the turnpike, where they stayed for the next half hour or so, the blank-faced cars droning by them in the cold, onrushing night.

Every once in a while, when I think of her, I'm driving alone somewhere on the highway. In the twilight, I see their car off to the side, a blue Olds coupe with a landau top, and as I pass them by I look back in the mirror and I see them again, the two figures huddling together in the front seat. Are they sleeping? Or kissing? Are they all right? ♦

FREUD'S DOOR

In 1992, while on assignment in Vienna, Helmut Newton paid a visit to No. 19 Berggasse, where Sigmund Freud lived from 1891 to 1938. Now a museum, the residence contains a replica of the couch used by patients during analytic sessions. "I thought about photographing that couch," Newton says. "Instead, I took pictures of the door. I thought it was very weird-looking with its metal bands." Such strips were a common security measure in nineteen-thirties Vienna, and Newton says that for him "they evoke the atmosphere of the city even today."

Photograph by Helmut Newton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A PLAY IN NINE SCENES

JILL'S ADVENTURES IN REAL ESTATE

or, I Can Get It for You at 3.2

BY WENDY WASSERSTEIN

PROLOGUE

(*Varsity Apartments, Eighty-fourth Street and First Avenue. The living room is squarish, the furniture is chromish, and the bookshelves Ikea-ish. Granita, twenty-eight, in Lycra, is roller-blading; Christopher Wren IV, twenty-nine, in shades of paler blues, is reading "Billy Baldwin Decorates"; and a couple are having sex as they watch "The Frugal Gourmet." Jill Jeremy, twenty-eight, attractive, in jeans and Haverford sweatshirt, is reading the real-estate section of the Sunday paper. She dials the phone.*)

Jill (*on the phone*): Hello, is this Phyllis B. Phyllis, at Action Views? My name is Jill Jeremy, and I just saw your ad for a Chelsea studio, wood-burning fireplace, loads of light plus views, for six hundred and fifty dollars a month. I'm currently paying a thousand a month for a share, but I definitely want to keep the next rent in the three figures. I'm leaving my job to become a full-time short-story writer. Something with character would be perfect. Monday at five-thirty would be great.

Christopher: Jill, could you keep it down? I'm trying to read.

Jill: I'd also like a little privacy.

SCENE 1

(*Chelsea studio, overlooking a brick wall. Phyllis B. Phyllis, in black dress, redder-than-red nails, and spike heels, is pulling contact paper off a minibar-size refrigerator in the front closet.*)

Phyllis: The thing that is so fabulous about this apartment is that the kitchen is in the closet, which gives you so much more space.

Jill: Yes, that's convenient.

Phyllis: And I adore a brick view! It's so quiet! And I know you want to write.

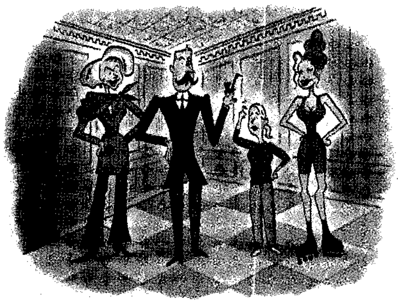
Jill: I thought there was a fireplace.

Phyllis: Darling, there's plenty of room for a fireplace in any of these four walls. All this needs is a few window treatments and some color. And I've seen it look terrific without any furniture. Who's doing your apartment?

Jill: Doing?

Phyllis: Who's helping you?

Jill: I have a roommate who went to the Rhode Island School of Design. We can come back tomorrow.



Phyllis: But you really have to decide today if you want this. I have two other parties ready to make an offer. This is going to get snapped up. I think it's a little gem.

Jill: I really was hoping for something with a bit more charm.

Phyllis: For charm, you're going to have to go back up to four figures. I do have something on Bank Street that would be perfect for you. It's a sublet, fabulous light, and a very literary location. You've got Willa Cather, Charles Kuralt, Herbert Bergdorf, and Uta Hagen.

Jill: Who's that?

Phyllis: The famous actress from the original ice-cream family. Like I said, it's the ideal Old New York literary location. You'll think you're Edith Wharton. Trust me. This place isn't for you. This is junk. I know what you want.

SCENE 2

(*Bank Street. One-bedroom. A narrow, exposed-brick living room. All the other walls are painted black. Christopher*

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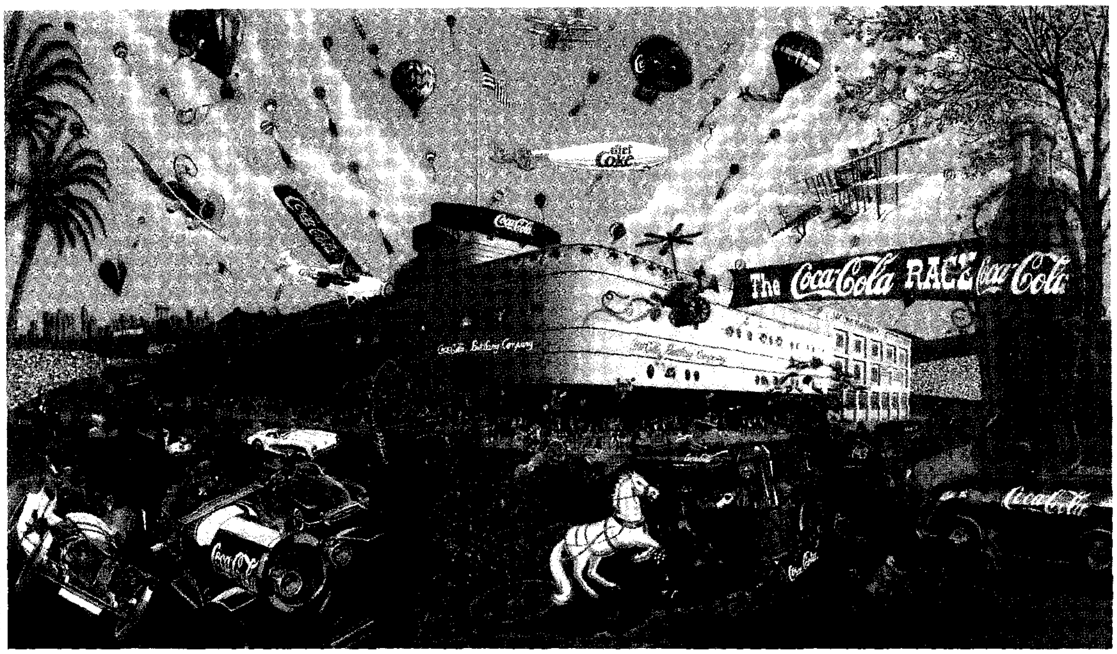

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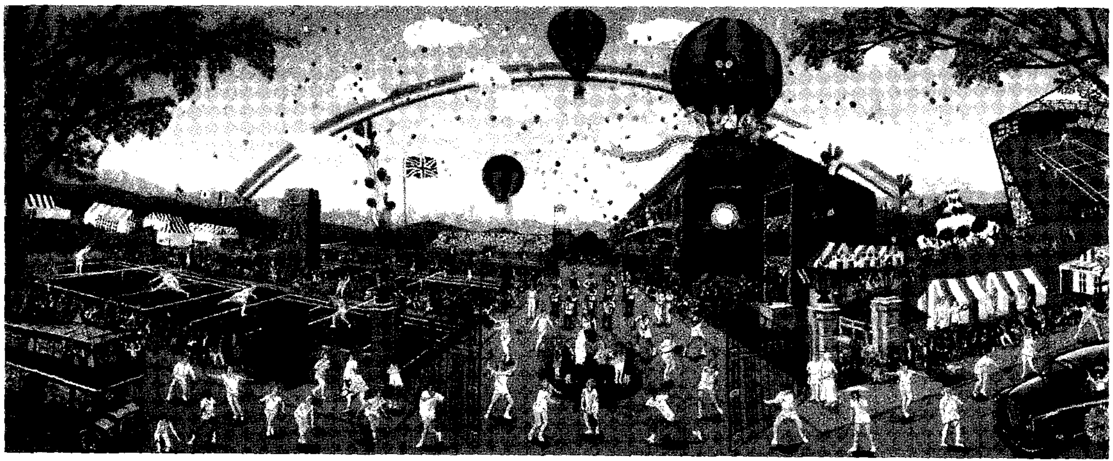

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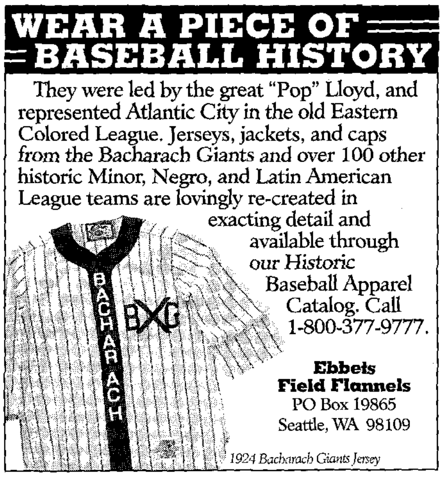

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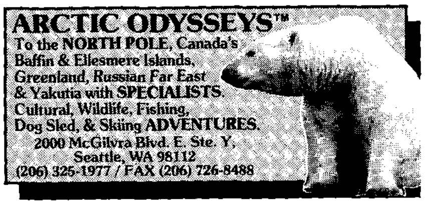

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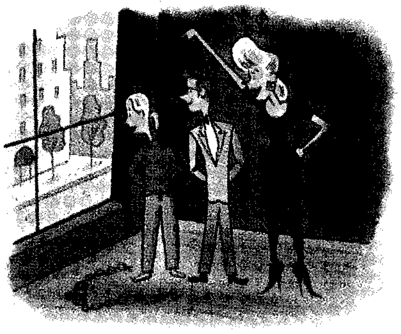
Wren IV, wearing wire-rimmed glasses, inspects with Jill and Phyllis.)

PHYLLIS: I'm so glad you're here, Christopher. I love people who know what they want. I just sold Brad Pitt a $2.6-million pied-à-terre, and it was the first apartment he saw. He walked in and knew right away. But, of course, Brad has such fabulous taste! I have to tell you that I love this apartment. Don't you think you can do something very cozy with this for Jill?

CHRISTOPHER: I'm feeling a little Holiday Inn, a little hanging ferns, a little S & M, and a little seriously seventies. What about the apartments across the street?

PHYLLIS: Well, those are the apartments across the street! Those are American classic! I just sold a house across the street to Linda Evangelista.

CHRISTOPHER: How much would Jill have to go up to get an apartment across the street?



PHYLLIS: I tell all my clients that once we're in the four-thousand-a-month bracket, which is what a nice apartment across the street would cost you, we really should start talking about buying, because the tax advantages make a lot of sense. That's what I told Sylvester Stallone's ex-girlfriend, and I found her the most fabulous loft in NoLisp.

JILL: Where's that?

PHYLLIS: North of Lispenard Street. Fabulous restaurants. Fabulous health clubs. All the supermodels love it. You can have breakfast with Harvey Keitel every morning.

SCENE 3

(*Law office of F. Bernard Aranoff, senior partner, tax division.*)

BERNARD: Find anything?

JILL: Phyllis B. Phyllis, at Action Views, tells me it makes more sense to buy a co-op.

BERNARD: Jill, you're a tax attorney and you're buying your first adult home. You don't use a nobody you found in the newspaper. I'm calling my agent right now. His name is Thomas Lee Edward, from the Edward Lee Edwards Agency. He's Henry Kissinger's real-estate agent, but he's very sympathetic to artists. He found Robert Fulghum his apartment. You know, I am thrilled with Carnegie Hill. You really should consider it. It's a great family neighborhood, and you're within walking distance of all the best schools.

JILL: But I don't have any children.

BERNARD: Don't be so negative, Jill. You will someday. All our women associates have integrated lives.

JILL: Yes. Then you put them on the mommy track, so they don't make partner.

BERNARD: Beg your pardon?

JILL: I'd be happy to meet Thomas Lee Edward.

SCENE 4

(*Carnegie Hill. Very pastel-yellow children's bedroom overlooking a courtyard. Thomas Lee Edward, an affable young man, in a blue suit, walks to the window and pulls open the duck-stencilled drapes. Christopher, Bernard, and Jill follow.*)

THOMAS: This is a great neighborhood for kids. It's near all the schools. And I think this is a great apartment. Louis Auchincloss once had lunch in this apartment.

BERNARD: Hear that, Jill? Jill's our firm's literary lion.

THOMAS: This happens to be a very artsy building. Your next-door neighbor arranges parties for Calvin Klein, and upstairs you've got C. Z. Guest's editor.

CHRISTOPHER: How much more would it be for something with a view of the Park?

THOMAS: Then you're really getting into the million-dollar range. But if you can see your way to it, it's worth it. Especially for the resale value. I was having the same conversation with Tony Kushner just last week.

CHRISTOPHER: I think "Perestroika" is the greatest play of the twentieth century.

JILL (*talking rapidly*): How much did Tony Kushner make from that play?

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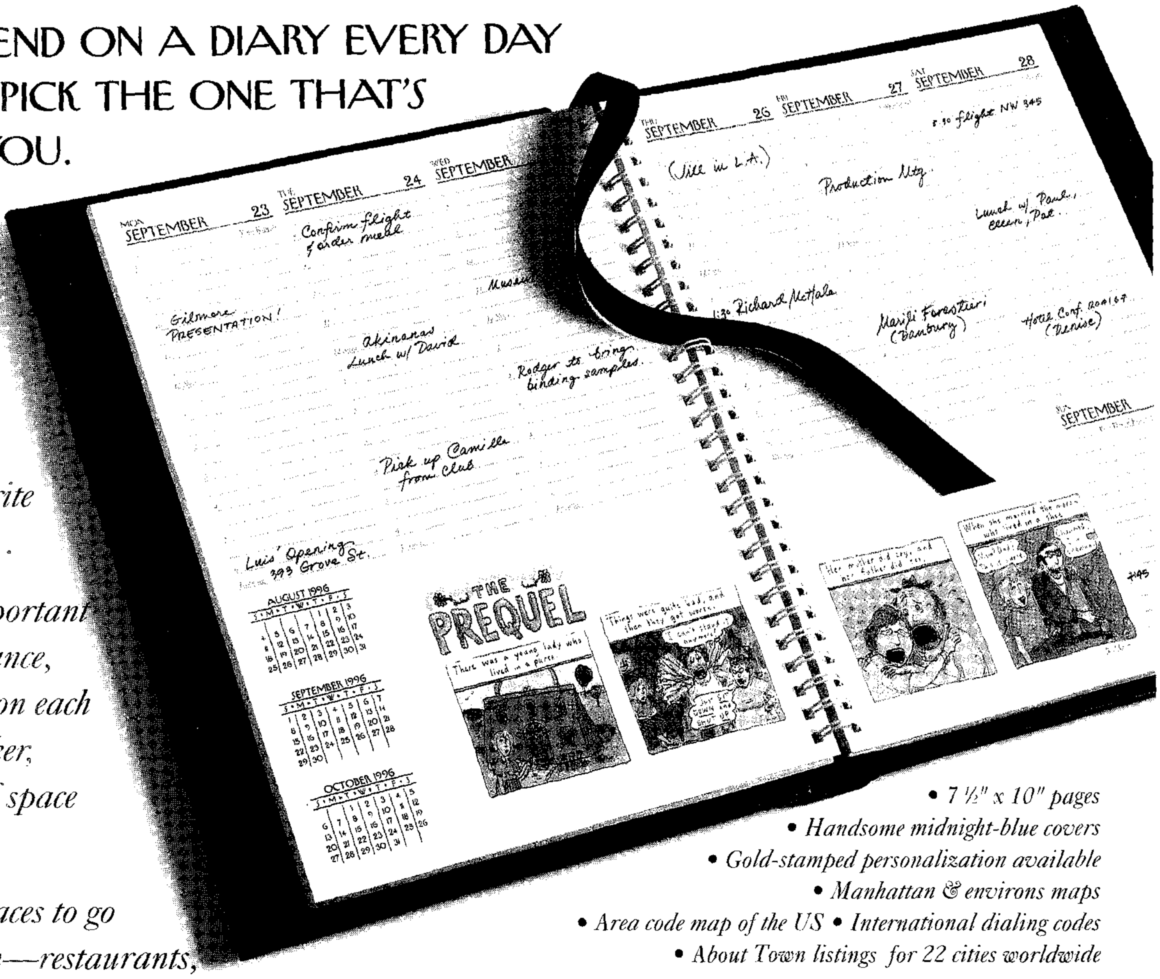

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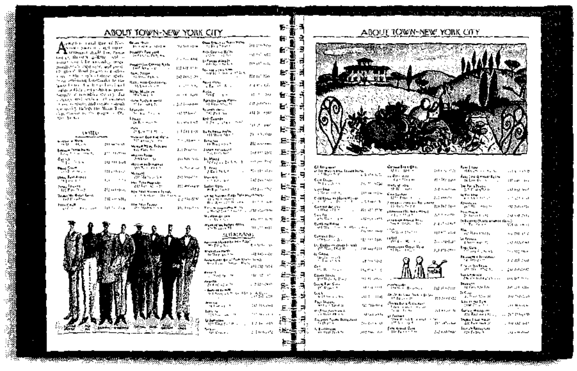

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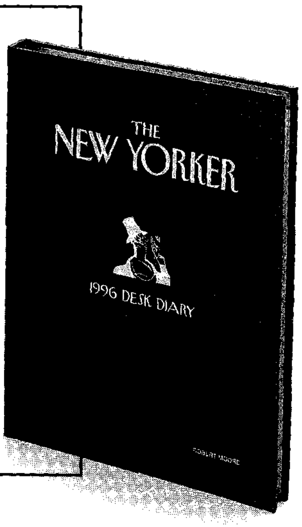

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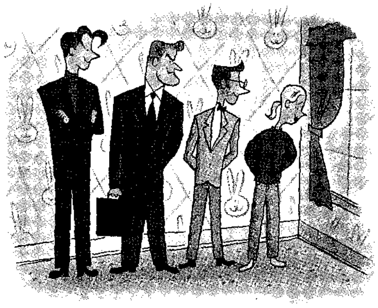
THOMAS: Tree level. On the second floor. Some people love it. Mark Hampton swears by the second floor.

JILL: What if I write "The Pelican Brief," "Perestroika," and "Presumed Innocent," and I base a hit TV comedy series on all the junior tax associates, like "Friends" meets "Melrose Place," only it's on Wall Street? I can call it "Happy Returns."



THOMAS: Then you could be in the back on a higher floor. I love the back. Jed Johnson swears by the back. (*A nude man from the apartment across the courtyard begins waving at them.*) Some people like exhibitionists. Some people can't bear them. It's all a matter of taste. Parish-Hadley swears by exhibitionists.

SCENE 5

(*The Six Guys Coffee Shoppe. Jill and Granita, still in Lycra, having lunch.*)

GRANITA: So I said to him, I said, "Buzzy, you've got fear of commitment, and that's your problem, because I'm not just going to sit here and let my life go by while you work out your ambivalence." I said, "Buzzy, I'm twenty-six, I've got a great body, a brilliant career, and a hell of a lot of options." And you know what happened next?

JILL: He said, "You're not twenty-six, you're twenty-eight, and I'm leaving you for Alicia Silverstone."

GRANITA: He pulled out a fifty-thousand-dollar Bulgari engagement ring and said, "Marry me, Granita." Buzzy says we'll have a much bigger wedding than Marie-Chantal Miller and the Prince of Greece did, and bigger than any of her sisters' weddings, and I feel totally O.K. about that, because he's giving a matching grant for the entire cost to my favorite charity. And here's the best part—Robert Isabel is doing the flowers! So my life has worked out perfectly. And how are you?

JILL: I'm still looking for an apartment.

GRANITA: You know how I got Buzzy to marry me? I had to rope him in, wrestle him to the ground, and brand him. That's what you have to do with an apartment. Jill, you'll pardon my saying this, but you're being entirely too passive. You have to use my agent Rosalee Rose, at Wells, Wells & Wells. She's already found for me the most wonderful little Stanford White house, on Gramercy Park. It used to be The Players club.

JILL: I don't want a house. I want a studio apartment.

GRANITA: Sh-h-h! And you have to get rid of Christopher Wren and use my decorator, Bario Baronial.

JILL: Who?

GRANITA: What do you mean, who? Everyone knows Bario. He's the Baron of Baronial. Bario has single-handedly brought back the Robber Baron style. Don't you ever read *Houses & Homes*? He's practically on the cover every issue. Are you listening to me?

JILL: I was thinking maybe I should change my name to an ice.

SCENE 6

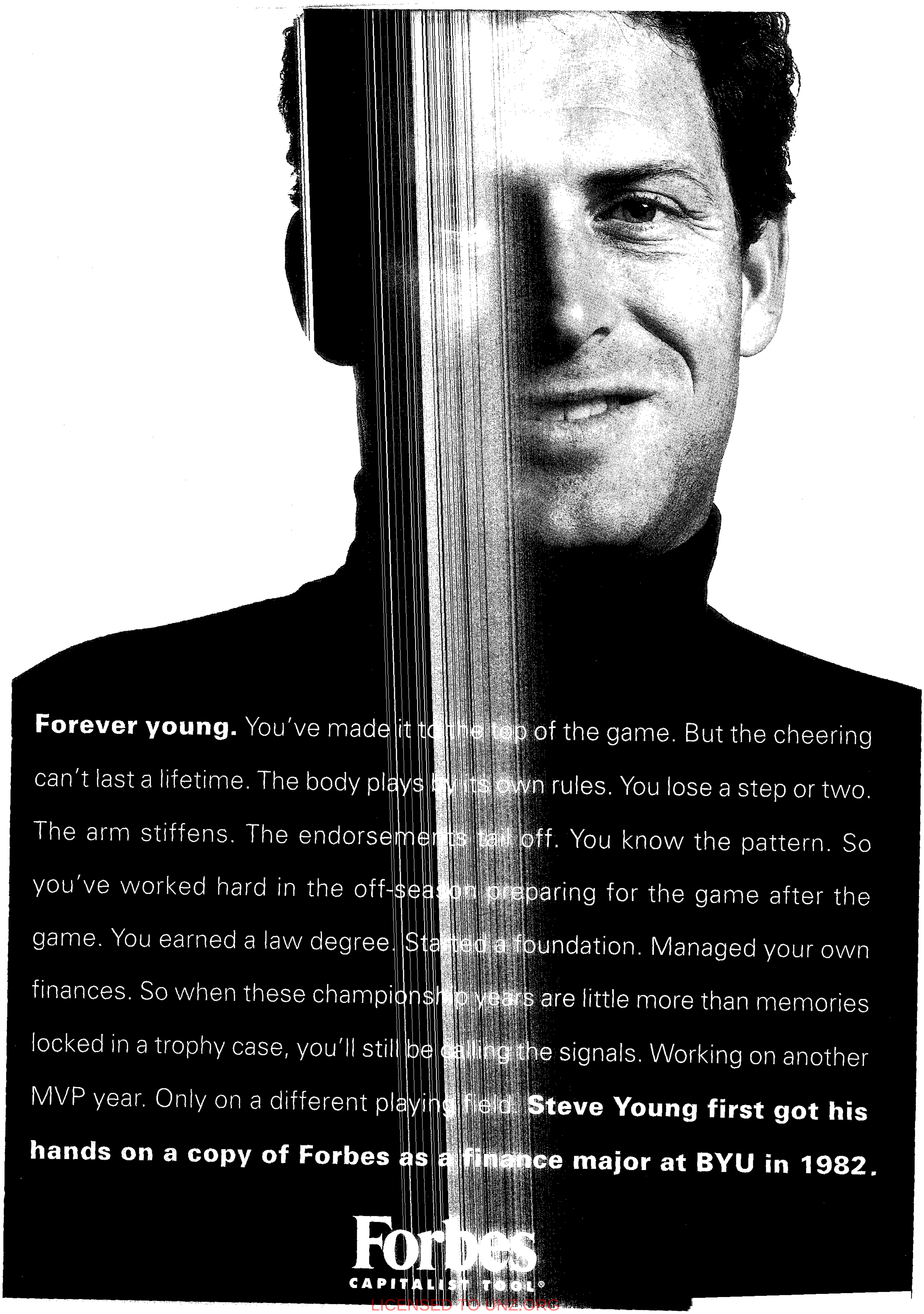
(*Park Avenue living room, an enormous room with fireplace and molding. Bario Baronial, around forty, with handlebar mustache, and wearing a suit similar to one of Cornelius Vanderbilt's; Rosalee Rose in a tasteful business suit and Hermès scarf; Granita in Versace Lycra; and Jill.*)

GRANITA: It's really just a maid's room. And it's much too light.

BARIO: Well, you could darken it down with wood panelling, large leather wing chairs, heavy chandeliers, velvet drapes, and rhino horns.

ROSALEE: You could also knock down the walls to the dining room and the study.

BARIO: The thing about these Park Avenue apartments is they're all really too small. I just had the same conver-



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sation with Barbara Walters. That's why the Carnegies, the Vanderbilts, and the Warburgs all built houses. The problem is they're all museums now, and it's very hard to get Landmarks Preservation to permit you to turn a museum into a private house.

ROSALEE: But it can be done. I just sold David Geffen the Metropolitan Museum and all its contents.

GRANITA: The Met would really be too big for Jill. But is the Cooper-Hewitt for sale?

BARIO: How about the Frick? I love that cloister.

GRANITA: I'll look into it.

ROSALEE: Have you considered Central Park West?

GRANITA: I hate the West Side.

ROSALEE: What do you think, Jill?

JILL: I don't know who I am anymore. Some days I'm Carnegie Hill Jill and other days I'm NoLisp Jill. How can I be the same person and a hundred blocks apart?

ROSALEE: But if you want to write and you're not moving to the Hamptons, or Jackson Hole, the West Side is really the place to be. By the way, our office does handle Jackson Hole. I've sold a lot of ranches to former New Yorkers. Have you considered a ranch, Jill?

BARIO: Speaking of ranches, what about the Dakota?

ROSALEE: I've got a co-broke in the Dakota.

SCENE 7

(*The Dakota, Central Park West. First floor. The original furnace room. A homeless man is sleeping on a bench in front of the window. Rosalee, in a new, crisp suit, enters with Jill. Phyllis has opened the door. She wears her signature spikes.*)

ROSALEE: Hello, Phyllis. I'd like you to meet Jill Jeremy.

PHYLLIS: I know Jill. Every real-estate agent in New York knows Jill. Do you know what we call you? Jill, the Show-Me State. I thought we had an exclusive, Jill.

JILL: But I never—

PHYLLIS: You're dishonorable, Jill.

JILL: But I never—

ROSALEE: Is this true?

JILL: Yes. I saw apartments with Phyllis.

ROSALEE: Who else have you been seeing apartments with, Jill? We'll find out. We all know each other.

JILL: Thomas Lee Edward at Edward Lee Edwards, Robbie Robb at L. Douglas Mann, John Bedsheets at Brownie, Harry & Stevie, Big Mac Parks at Scribbling & More Scribbling.

ROSALEE: Jill, you've seen over two hundred apartments. Have you talked to a psychiatrist about this? You're getting a very bad reputation. You need to work on your decision-making.

JILL: I really, really like this apartment. I really, really want to live here. I'm really, really happy you're co-brokering so you can split the commission. How much is this apartment?

PHYLLIS and ROSALEE: Three point five million. But the owner is negotiable at three point two.

ROSALEE: I think you'll be very happy here. It's a great buy. I've got six other people coming back this afternoon.

PHYLLIS: You've looked for so long—just make a bid.

ROSALEE: I wouldn't let you take any place if you wouldn't be happy with it. And I can always turn this around and sell it. It's a great professional space.

JILL: What about the man sleeping in front of my window?

ROSALEE: Have you read the Alan Bennett diaries? Did you read about the lady who lived on his lawn? The book was a best-seller in England. You can write about the man who sleeps in your window.

SCENE 8

(*Law office of F. Bernard Aranoff, senior partner, tax division.*)

JILL: They accepted my offer. What should I do?

BERNARD: Do you love the apartment?

JILL: I need someplace to live.

BERNARD: Three point five million is a lot of money to pay because you need somewhere to live.

JILL: There was a bidding war.

BERNARD: Look, Jill, now that you've decided to work double time and sell your parents' house and their car and your law degree and your grandmother's entire rare Stickley Arts-and-Crafts furniture collection plus write five television series and ghostwrite Newt's next five novels in order to afford an apartment, get something that you love.

JILL: But Rosalee and Phyllis will be furious.

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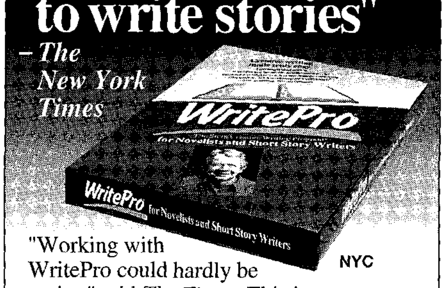

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BERNARD: They're real-estate agents. We'll call Thomas Lee Edward.

JILL: He's furious, too.

BERNARD: He's a real-estate agent. Besides, he just sold the Empire State Building to Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber. He wanted a loft with great views, high ceilings, and a rehearsal studio. But I understand there are a few studios left in the Tower.

SCENE 9

(*Empire State Building. Tower. A studio apartment. The room is squarish, the furniture is chromish, and the bookshelves Ikea-ish. The view is magnificent. There are paper plates everywhere. Granita, Bario, Christopher, Bernard, and Jill follow Thomas to the window.*)

THOMAS: Sir Andrew had a party here last night.

GRANITA: It's so charming that he uses paper plates. I get a very good feel from that.

THOMAS: I happen to know that Martha Stewart was here last night and she says that this apartment has the best bathroom in New York. And I know that Steven Spielberg looked at this apartment and loved it, but Kate insisted they needed more than a studio. He was also at the party last night.

BERNARD: Who else was here?

THOMAS: Johnny Depp, Jayne Anne Phillips, President Chirac, Elizabeth Hurley, Anna Sui, Ronald Perelman, Forrest Sawyer, Ice T, Mark Morris, Colin Powell, Howell Raines, Christopher Darden, Nicholas Hytner, Naomi Campbell, James Lovell, Miss Divine Brown, Alicia Silverstone, Senator Alan Simpson, David Bouley, Donna Hanover Giuliani, and Betty Buckley.

BERNARD: I think you should take it.

CHRISTOPHER: You won't even have to light it at night. It'll automatically be orange for Halloween, and red-white-and-blue for the Fourth of July.

BARIO: Take it.

GRANITA: Take it.

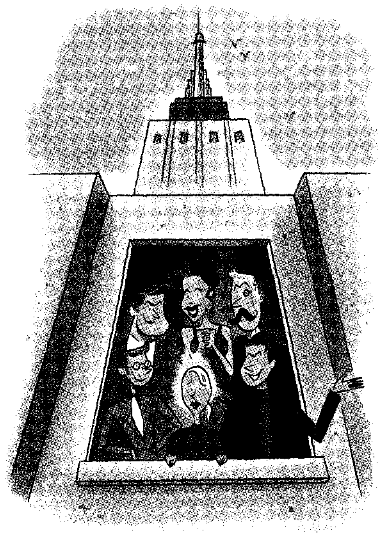
BERNARD: Take it.

CHRISTOPHER: Take it.

THOMAS: Take it.

JILL: All right. I'll take it. How much?

THOMAS: Seven million. But I think we can get it for six point five. (*The song "Memory" begins flooding through the window.*) I forgot to tell you. As a gift to the city of New York, Sir Andrew has arranged for cats to dance up and down the spire every hour. And it's included in the maintenance.



EPILOGUE

(*The "Charlie Rose" show. A studio on Park Avenue. A round table and chair. Charlie and Jill sit across from each other.*)

CHARLIE: I understand you wrote six best-sellers this year in order to afford an apartment and you're still a tax attorney.

JILL: Yes, Charlie.

CHARLIE: Have you found an apartment yet?

JILL: No. And I've seen over two thousand of them.

CHARLIE: I have to move on Friday, and I've got nowhere to go. My landlord sold my house. Do you have the name of a real-estate agent?

JILL: Charlie, I've *become* a real-estate agent, because they all stopped talking to me, and Thomas Lee Edward retired because of me and moved to New Zealand. I just sold Michael Eisner the Metropolitan Opera House for "Disney/ABC News on Ice." I'd be happy to take you out looking.

CHARLIE: Can I ask where you are living now?

JILL: The Y, on Ninety-second and Lexington. It costs me six hundred and fifty dollars a month.

CHARLIE: Jill Jeremy, best-selling author, tax attorney, and real-estate agent, thanks for joining me. Good night.

JILL: Thank you, Charlie. Good night. ♦

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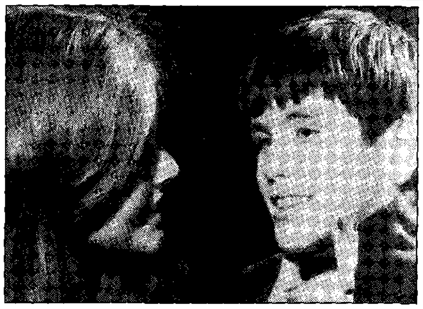

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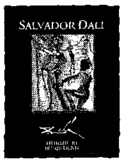

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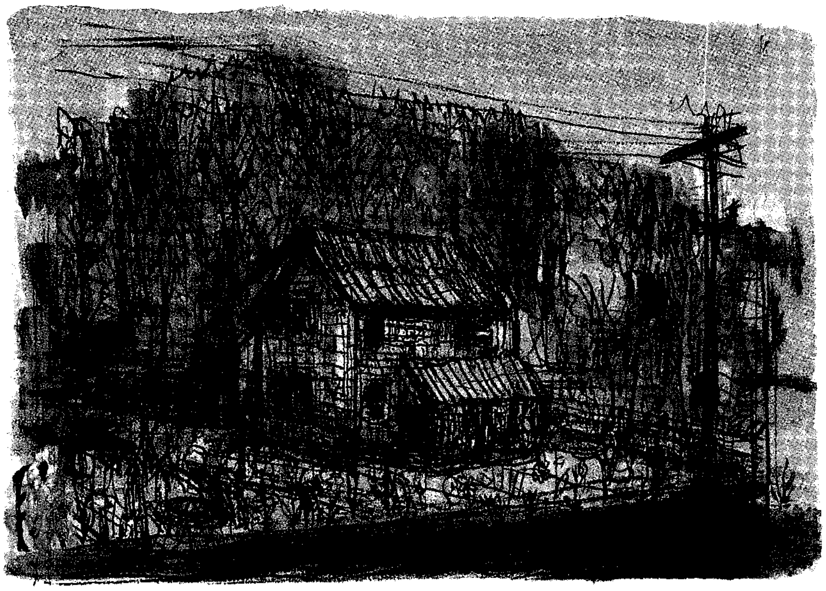
THE WAY WE LIVED

THEY ALL JUST WENT AWAY

Where a house has been abandoned, you can be sure there has been a sad story.

BY JOYCE CAROL OATES

I MUST have been a lonely child. Until the age of twelve or thirteen, my most intense, happiest hours were spent tramping desolate fields, woods, and creek banks near my family's farmhouse in Millersport, New York. No one knew where I went. My father, working most of the day at Harrison's, a division of General Motors in Lockport, and at other times preoccupied, would not have asked; if my mother asked, I might have answered in a way that would deflect curiosity. I was an articulate, verbal child. Yet I could not have explained what drew me to the abandoned houses, barns, silos, corncribs. A hike of miles through fields of spiky grass, across outcroppings of shale as steeply angled as stairs, was a lark if the reward was an empty house.



The Weidel house, it would be called for years. As if the very land were somehow imprinted with that name, a man's identity. Or infamy.

GARY PANTER

Some of these houses had been inhabited as "homes" fairly recently—they had not yet reverted to the wild. Others, abandoned during the Depression, had long since begun to rot and collapse, engulfed by vegetation (trumpet vine, wisteria, rose of Sharon, willow) that elsewhere, on our property, for instance, were kept neatly trimmed. I was drawn to both kinds of houses, though the more recently inhabited were more forbidding and therefore more inviting.

To push open a door into such silence: the absolute emptiness of a house whose occupants have departed. Often, the crack of broken glass underfoot. A startled buzzing of flies, hornets. The slithering, ticklish sensation of a garter snake crawling across floorboards.

Left behind, as if in haste, were remnants of a lost household. A broken toy on the floor, a baby's bottle. A rain-soaked sofa, looking as if it had been gutted with a hunter's skilled knife. Strips of wallpaper like shredded skin. Smashed crockery, piles of tin cans; soda, beer, whiskey bottles. An icebox, its door yawning open. Once, on a counter, a dirt-stiffened rag that, unfolded like precious cloth, revealed itself to be a woman's cheaply glamorous "see-through" blouse, threaded with glitter-strips of gold.

This was a long time ago, yet it is more vivid to me than anything now.

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This was when I was too young to think the house is the mother's body; you have been expelled and are forbidden now to reënter.

Always, I was prepared to see a face at a high, empty window. A woman's hand uplifted in greeting, or in warning. *Hello! Come in! Stay away! Run! Who are you?* A movement in the corner of my eye: the blurred motion of a person passing through a doorway, or glimpsed through a window. There might be a single shriek of laughter from a barn—piercing as a bird's cry. Murmurous, teasing voices confused with wind rippling through tall, coarse, gone-to-seed grass. Voices that, when you pause to listen, fade immediately and are gone.

The sky in such places of abandonment was always of the hue and brightness of tin, as if the melancholy rural poverty of tin roofs reflected upward.

A HOUSE: a structural arrangement of space, geometrically laid out to provide what are called rooms, these divided from one another by verticals and horizontals called walls, ceilings, floors. The house contains the home but is not identical with it. The house anticipates the home and will very likely survive it, reverting again simply to house when home (that is, life) departs. For only where there is life can there be home.

I have never found the visual equivalent of these abandoned farmhouses of upstate New York, of northern Erie County, in the area of the long, meandering Tonawanda Creek and the Barge Canal. You think most immediately of the canvases of Edward Hopper: those dreamily stylized visions of a lost America, houses never depicted as homes, and human beings, if you look closer, never depicted as other than mannequins. For Hopper is not a realist but a surrealist. His dreams are of the ordinary, as if, even in imagination, the artist were trapped in an unyielding daylight consciousness. There seems almost a kind of rage, a revenge against such restraints, in Hopper's studied, endlessly repeated *simplicity*. By contrast, Charles Burchfield, with his numerous oils and watercolors—frequently of upstate New York landscapes, houses, and farms—rendered the real as visionary and luminous, suffused with a Blakean rapture and a kind of radical simplicity, too. Then there are the shimmering New England barns, fields, and skies of our contemporary Wolf Kahn—images evoked by

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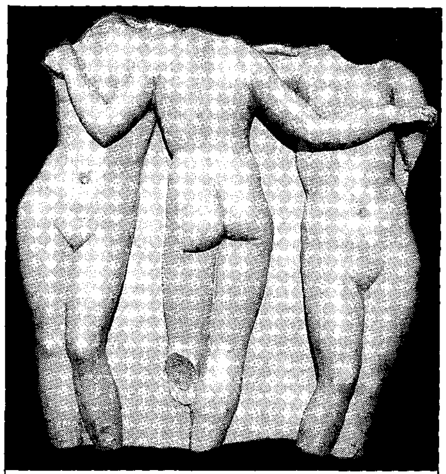

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memory, almost on the verge of dissolution. But the "real"—what assaults the eye before the eye begins its work of selection—is never on the verge of dissolution, still less of appropriation. The real is raw, jarring, unexpected, sometimes trashy, sometimes luminous. Above all, the real is arbitrary. For to be a realist (in art or in life) is to acknowledge that all things might be other than they are. That there is no design, no intention, no aesthetic or moral or teleological imprimatur but, rather, the equivalent of Darwin's great vision of a blind, purposeless, ceaseless evolutionary process that yields no "products"—only temporary strategies against extinction.

Yet, being human, we think, To what purpose these broken-off things, if not to be gathered up, at last, in a single ecstatic vision?

THERE is a strange and profound and unknowable reality to these abandoned houses where jealously guarded, even prized possessions have become mere trash: windowpanes long ago smashed, and the spaces where they had been festooned with cobwebs, and cobwebs brushing against your face, catching in your hair like caresses. The peculiar, dank smell of wood rot and mildew, in one of the houses I most recall that had partly burned down, the smell of smoke and scorch, in early summer pervading even the lyric smell of honeysuckle—these haunting smells, never, at the time of experiencing, given specific sources, names.

Where a house has been abandoned—unworthy of being sold to new tenants, very likely seized by the county for default on taxes and the property held in escrow—you can be sure there has been a sad story. There have been devastated lives. Lives to be spoken of pityingly. How they went wrong. Why did she marry him, why did she stay with him? Just desperate people. Ignorant. Poor white trash. Runs in the family. A wrong turn.

SHALL I say for the record that ours was a happy, close-knit, and unextraordinary family for our time, place, and economic status? Yet what was vividly real in the solid-built old farmhouse that contained my home (my family consisted of my father, mother, younger brother, grandfather, and grandmother, who owned the property—a slow-failing farm whose principal crop had become Bartlett pears by the time I was a girl) was of far

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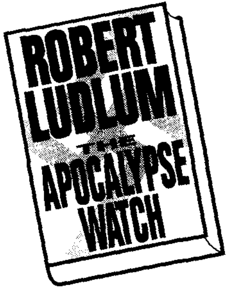

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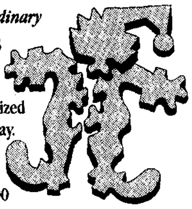

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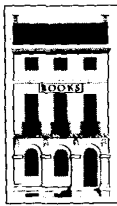

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less significance to me than what was real elsewhere. A gone-to-seed landscape had an authority that seemed to me incontestable: the powerful authority of silence in houses from which the human voice had vanished. For the abandoned house contained the future of any house—the lilac tree pushing through the rotted veranda, hornets' nests beneath eaves, windows smashed by vandals, human excrement left to dry on a parlor floor once scrubbed on hands and knees.

The abandoned, the devastated, was the profound experience, whereas involvement in family life—the fever, the bliss, the abrasions, the infinite distractions of human love—was so clearly temporary. Like a television screen upon which antic images (at this time, in the fifties, minimally varying gradations of gray) appear fleetingly and are gone.

I have seemed to suggest that the abandoned houses were all distant from our house, but in fact the one that had been partly gutted by fire—which I will call the Weidel house—was perhaps a half mile away. If you drove, turning right off Transit Road, which was our road, onto the old Creek Road, it would have been a distance of a mile or more, but if you crossed through our back potato field and through the marshy woods which no one seemed to own, it was a quick walk.

The Weidels' dog, Slossie, a mixed breed with a stumpy, energetic tail and a sweet disposition, sand-colored, rheumy-eyed, as hungry for affection as for the scraps we sometimes fed her, trotted over frequently to play with my brother and me. Though, strictly speaking, Slossie was not wanted at our house. None of the Weidels were wanted.

The "Weidel house," it would be called for years. The "Weidel property." As if the very land—which the family had not owned in any case, but only rented, partly with county-welfare support—were somehow imprinted with that name, a man's identity. Or infamy.

For tales were told of the father who drank, beat and terrorized his family, "did things to" his daughters, and finally set the house on fire and fled and was arrested, disappearing forever from the proper, decent life of our community. There was no romance in Mr. Weidel, whom my father knew only slightly and despised as a drinker, and as a wife- and child-beater. Mr. Weidel was a railway worker in Lockport, or perhaps an ex-railway

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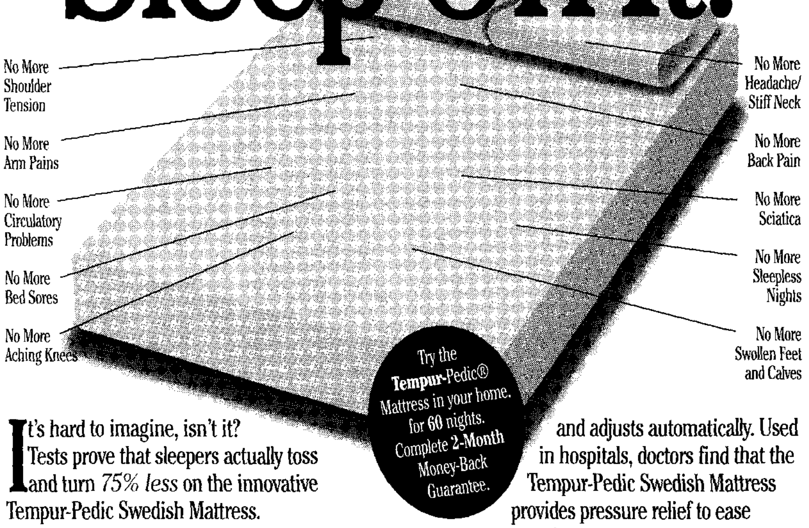
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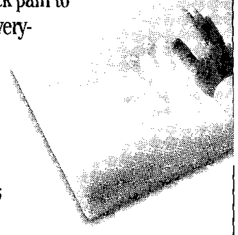

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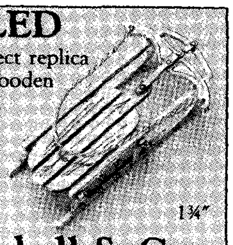

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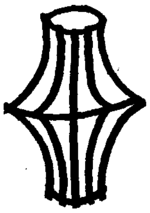
worker, for he seemed to work only sporadically, though he always wore a railwayman's cap. He and his elder sons were hunters, owning a shotgun among them, and one or two deer rifles. His face was broad, fair, vein-swollen, with a look of flushed, alcoholic reproach. He was tall and heavyset, with graying black whiskers that sprouted like quills. His eyes had a way of swerving in their sockets, seeking you out when you could not slip away quickly enough. *H'lo there, little Joyce! Joycie! Joycie Oates, h'lo!* He wore rubber boots that flapped, unbuckled, about his feet.



Mrs. Weidel was a faded-pretty, apologetic woman with a body that seemed to have become bloated, as with a perpetual pregnancy. Her bosom had sunk to her waist. Her legs were encased, sausagelike, in flesh-colored support hose. *How can that woman live with him? That pig.* There was disdain, disgust, in this frequent refrain. *Why doesn't she leave him? Did you see that black eye? Did you hear them the other night? Take the girls away, at least.* It was thought that she could, for Mrs. Weidel was the only one in the family who seemed to work at all regularly. She was hired for seasonal canning in a tomato factory in lower Lockport and may have done housecleaning in the city.

A shifting household of relatives and rumored "boarders" lived in the Weidel house. There were six Weidel children, four sons and two daughters. Ruth was a year older than I, and Dorothy two years younger. There was an older brother of Mr. Weidel's, who walked with a cane and was said to be an ex-convict, from Attica. The eldest Weidel son, Roy, owned a motorcycle, and friends of his often visited, fellow-bikers. There were loud parties, frequent disputes, and tales of Mr. Weidel's chasing his wife with a butcher knife, a claw hammer, the shotgun, threatening to "blow her head off." Mrs. Weidel and the younger children fled outdoors in terror and hid in the hayloft. Sheriff's deputies drove out to the house, but no charges were ever pressed against Mr. Weidel. Until the fire, which was so public that it couldn't be denied.

There was the summer day—I was eleven years old—that Mr. Weidel shot Slossie. We heard the poor creature yelping and whimpering for what seemed like hours. When my father came home from work, he went to speak to Mr. Weidel, though my mother begged him not to. By this time, the dog had dragged herself beneath the Weidels' house to die. Mr. Weidel was furious at the intrusion, drunk, defensive—Slossie was his goddam dog, he said, she'd been getting in the way, she was "old." But my father convinced him to put the poor dog out of her misery. So Mr. Weidel made one of his sons drag Slossie out from beneath the house, and he straddled her and shot her a second time, and a third, at close range. My father, who'd never hunted, who'd never owned a gun, backed off, a hand over his eyes.

Afterward, my father would say of that day that walking away from that drunken son of a bitch with a rifle in his hands was about the hardest thing he'd ever done. He'd expected a shot between his shoulders.

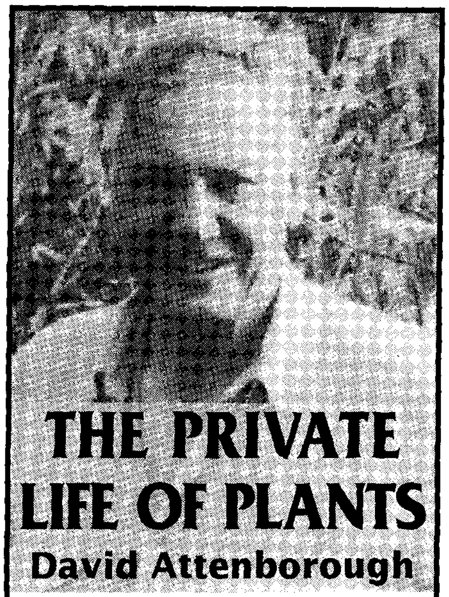
The fire was the following year, around Thanksgiving.

After the Weidels were gone from Millersport and the house stood empty, I discovered Slossie's grave. I'm sure it was Slossie's grave. It was beyond the dog hutch, in the weedy back yard, a sunken patch of earth measuring about three feet by four with one of Mrs. Weidel's big whitewashed rocks at the head.

Morning glories grew in clusters on the posts of the front porch. Mrs. Weidel had planted hollyhocks, sunflowers, and trumpet vine in the yard. Tough, weedlike flowers that would survive for years.

It had been said of Ruth and her sister Dorothy that they were "slow." Yet Ruth was never slow to fly into a rage when she was teased by neighborhood boys or by her older brothers. She waved her fists and stammered obscenities, words that stung like hail. Her face darkened with blood, and her full, thick lips quivered with a strange sort of pleasure. How you loved to see Ruth Weidel fly into one of her rages; it was like holding a lighted match to flammable material.

The Weidel house was like any other run-down wood-frame house, said by my grandfather to have been "thrown up" in the nineteen-twenties. It had no cellar, only a concrete-block foundation—an emptiness that gradually filled with debris. It had an upstairs with several small bedrooms. There was no attic. No insulation. Steep, almost vertical stairs. The previous tenant had started to construct a front porch of raw planks, never completed or



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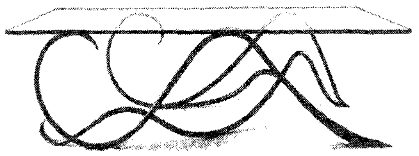

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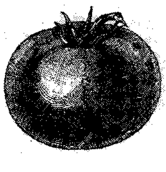

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painted. (Though Mrs. Weidel added "touches" to the porch—chairs, a woven-rush rug, geraniums in flowerpots.) The roof of the house was made of sheets of tin, scarred and scabbed like skin, and the front was covered in simulated-brick asphalt siding pieced together from lumberyard scraps. All year round, a number of the windows were covered in transparent duct tape and never opened. From a distance, the house was the fading dun color of a deer's winter coat.

Our house had an attic and a cellar and a deep well and a solid cement foundation. My father did all the carpentry on our house, most of the shingling, the painting, the masonry. I would not know until I was an adult that he'd come from what's called a "broken home" himself—what an image, luridly visual, of a house literally broken, split in two, its secrets spilled out onto the ground for all to see, like entrails.

My mother, unlike Mrs. Weidel, had time to houseclean. It was a continuous task, a mother's responsibility. My mother planted vegetables, strawberries, beds of flowers. Petunias and pansies and zinnias. Crimson peonies that flowered for my birthday, in mid-June.

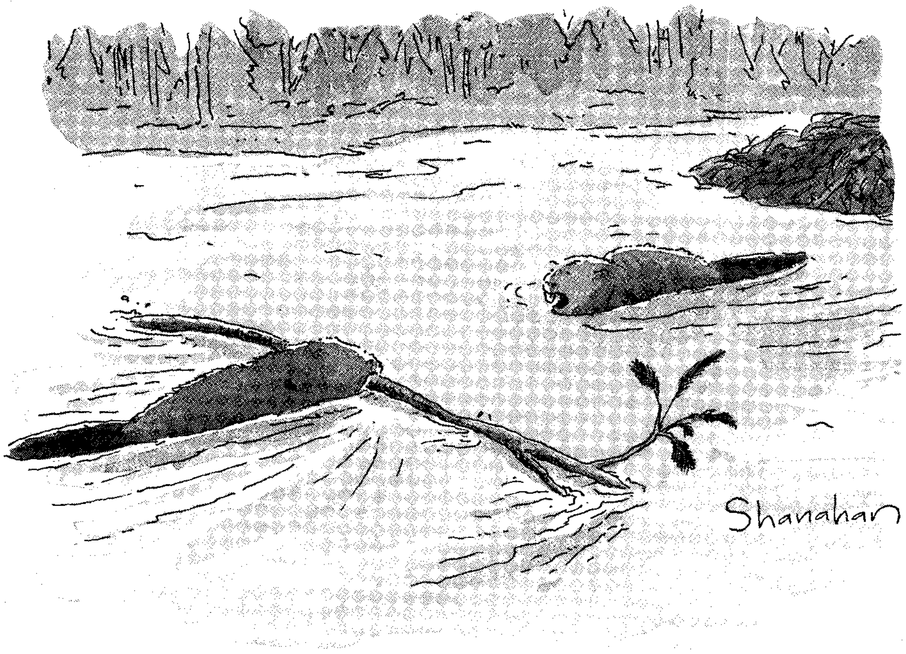
I REMEMBER the night of the fire vividly, as if it had been a festive affair to which I'd been invited.

There was the sound of a siren on the Creek Road. There were shouts, and an astonishing burst of flame in the night, in the direction of the Weidel house. The air was moist, and reflected and magnified the fire, surrounding it like a nimbus. My grandparents would claim there had never been such excitement in Millersport, and perhaps that was true. My father dressed hurriedly and went to help the firefighters, and my mother and the rest of us watched from upstairs windows. The fire began at about 1 A.M., and it would be past 4 A.M. before my seven-year-old brother and I got back to bed.

Yet what was so exciting an event was, in fact, an ending, with nothing to follow. Immediately afterward, the Weidels disappeared from Millersport and from our lives. It was said that Mr. Weidel fled "as a fugitive" but was captured and arrested the next day, in Buffalo. The family was broken up, scattered, the younger children placed in foster homes. That quickly, the Weidels were gone.

For a long time, the smell of wood smoke, scorch, pervaded the air of Millersport, the fresh, damp smell of earth sullied by its presence. Neighbors complained that the Weidel house should be razed at the county's expense, bulldozed over, and the property sold. But nothing was done, for years. Who knows why? When I went away to college, the old falling-down house was still there.

How swiftly, in a single season, a human habitation can turn wild. The bumpy cinder driveway over which the eldest



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Weidel son had ridden his motorcycle was soon stippled with tall weeds.

What had happend to Roy Weidel? It was said he'd joined the Navy. No, he had a police record and could not have joined the Navy. He'd disappeared. Asked by the police to give a sworn statement about the night of his father's "arson," he'd panicked and fled.

Signs were posted—"NO TRESPASSING," "THIS PROPERTY CONDEMNED BY ERIE CO."—and they, too, over a period of months, became shabby and faded. My parents warned me never to wander onto the Weidel property. There was a well with a loose-fitting cover, among other dangers. As if *I* would fall into a well! I smiled to think how little my parents knew me. How little anyone knew me.

Have I said that my father never struck his children, as Mr. Weidel struck his? And did worse things to them, to the girls sometimes, it was whispered. Yes, and Mrs. Weidel, who seemed so soft and apologetic and sad, she, too, had beaten the younger children when she'd been drinking. County social workers came around to question neighbors, and spread the story of what they learned along the way.

In fact, I may have been disciplined, spanked, a few times. Like most children, I don't remember. I remember Mr. Weidel spanking his children until they screamed (though I wasn't a witness, was I?), but I don't remember being spanked by my parents, and in any case, if I was, it was no more than I deserved.

I'd seen Mr. Weidel urinating once at the roadside. The loose-flying skein of the kerosene he'd flung around the house before setting the fire must have resembled the stream of his urine, transparent and glittering. But they laughed, saying Mr. Weidel had been too drunk, or too careless, to have done an adequate job of sprinkling kerosene through the downstairs of the house. Wasn't it like him, such a slovenly job. Only part of the house had burned, a wall of the kitchen and an adjoining woodshed.

Had Mr. Weidel wanted to burn his family alive in their beds? Mrs. Weidel testified no, they'd all been awake, they'd run out into the yard before the fire began. They'd never been in any danger, she swore. But Mr. Weidel was indicted on several counts of attempted murder, along with other charges.

For so many years the Weidel house remained standing. There was something

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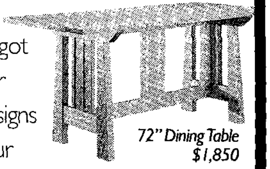

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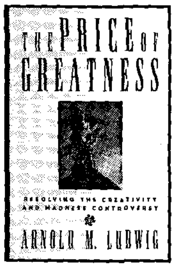

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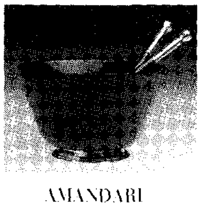

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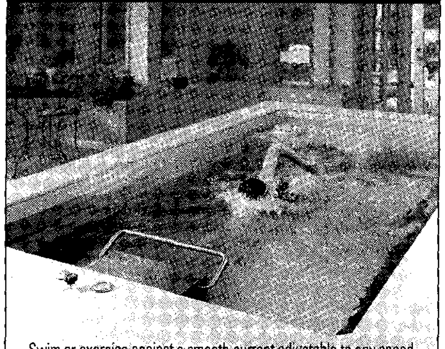

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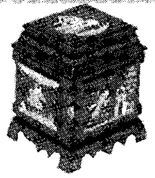

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defiant about it, like someone who has been mortally wounded but will not die. In the weedy front yard, Mrs. Weidel's display of whitewashed rocks and plaster-of-Paris gnomes and the clay pedestal with the shiny blue glass ball disappeared from view within a year or so. Brambles grew everywhere. I forced myself to taste a small bitter red berry but spat it out, it made my mouth pucker so.

What did it mean that Erie County had "condemned" the Weidel property? The downstairs windows were carelessly boarded over, and both the front and rear doors were unlocked, collapsing on their hinges. Broken glass underfoot and a sickish stench of burn, mildew, decay. Yet there were "touches"—on what remained of a kitchen wall, a Holstein calendar from a local feed store, a child's crayon drawing. Upstairs, children's clothes, socks and old shoes heaped on the floor. I recognized with a thrill of repugnance an old red sweater of Ruth's, angora-fuzzy. There were broken Christmas-tree ornaments, a naked pink plastic doll. Toppled bedsprings, filthy mattresses streaked with yellow and rust-colored stains. The mattresses looked as if they'd been gutted, their stuffing strewn about. The most terrible punishment, I thought, would be to be forced to lie down on such a mattress.

I thought of Mrs. Weidel, her swollen, blackened eyes, her bruised face. Shouts and sirens in the night, the sheriff's patrol car. But no charges filed. The social worker told my mother how Mrs. Weidel had screamed at the county people, insisting her husband hadn't done anything wrong and shouldn't go to jail. The names she'd called them! Unrepeatable.

She was the wife of that man, they'd had babies together. The law had no right to interfere. The law had nothing to do with them.

As a woman and as a writer, I have long wondered at the wellsprings of female masochism. Or what, in despair of a more subtle, less reductive phrase, we can call the congeries of predilections toward self-hurt, self-erasure, self-repudiation in women. These predilections are presumably "learned"—"acquired"—but perhaps also imprinted in our genes, of biological necessity, neurophysiological fate, predilections that predate culture. Indeed, may shape culture. Do not say, "Yes, but these are isolated, peripheral examples. These are marginal Americans, uneducated. They tell us nothing about ourselves." They tell us everything about ourselves, and even the telling, the exposure, is a kind of cutting, an inscription in the flesh.

Yet what could possibly be the evolutionary advantage of self-hurt in the female? Abnegation in the face of another's cruelty? Acquiescence to another's will? This loathsome secret that women do not care to speak of, or even acknowledge.

Two or three years later, in high school, twelve miles away in a consolidated district school to which, as a sophomore, I went by school bus, Ruth Weidel appeared. She was living now with relatives in Lockport. She looked, at sixteen, like a woman in her twenties; big-breasted, with full, strong thighs and burnished-brown hair inexpertly bleached. Ruth's homeroom was "special education," but she took some classes with the rest of us. If she recognized me, in our home-economics class, she was careful to give no sign.

There was a tacit understanding that "something had happened" to Ruth Weidel, and her teachers treated her guardedly. Ruth was special, the way a handicapped person is special. She was withdrawn, quiet; if still prone to violent outbursts of rage, she might have been on medication to control it. Her eyes, like her father's, seemed always about to swerve in their sockets. Her face was round, fleshy, like a pudding, her nose oily-pored. Yet she wore lipstick, she was "glamorous"—almost. In gym class, Ruth's large breasts straining against her T-shirt and the shining rippled muscles and fatty flesh of her thighs were amazing to us; we were so much thinner and less female, so much younger.

I believed that I should protect Ruth Weidel, so I told none of the other students about her family. Even to Ruth, for a long time I pretended not to know who she was. I can't explain how Ruth could have possibly believed me, yet this seems to have been so. Quite purposefully, I befriended Ruth. I thought her face would lose its sallow hardness if she could be made to smile, and so it became a kind of challenge to me to induce Ruth Weidel to smile. She was lonely and miserable at school, and flattered by my attention. For so few "normal" girls sought out "specialed" girls. At first she may have been suspicious, but by degrees she became trusting. I thought of Slossie: trust shows in the eyes.

I sat with Ruth at lunch in the school cafeteria and eventually I asked her about the house on the old Creek Road, and she lied bluntly, to my face, insisting that an uncle of hers had owned that house. She'd only visited a few times. She and her family. I asked, "How did the fire start?" and Ruth said, slowly, each word sucked like a pebble in the mouth, "Lightning. Lightning hit it. One night in a storm." I asked, "Are you living with your mother now, Ruth?" and Ruth shrugged, and made a face, and said, "She's O.K. I see her sometimes." I asked about Dorothy. I asked where Mrs. Weidel was. I said that my mother had always liked her mother, and missed her when she went away. But Ruth seemed not to hear. Her gaze had drifted. I said, "Why did you all move away?" Ruth did not reply, though I could hear her breathing hard. "Why did you abandon your house? It could have been fixed. It's still there. Your mom's hollyhocks are still there. You should come out and see it sometime. You could visit me." Ruth shrugged, and laughed. She gave me a sidelong glance, almost flirtatiously. It was startling to see how good-looking she could be, how sullen-sexy; to know how men would stare at her who would never so much as glance at a girl like me. Ruth said slowly, as if she'd come to a final, adamant conclusion to a problem that had long vexed her, "They all just went away."

Another time, after lunch with Ruth, I left a plastic change purse with a few coins in it on the ledge in one of the girls' lavatories, where Ruth was washing her hands. I don't recall whether I left it on purpose or not. But when I returned, after waiting for Ruth to leave the lavatory, the change purse was gone.

Once or twice, I invited Ruth Weidel to come home with me on the school bus some afternoon, to Millersport, to have supper with my family and stay the night. I must not have truly believed she might accept, for my mother would have been horrified and would have forced me to rescind the invitation. Ruth had hesitated, as if she wanted to say yes, wanted very badly to say yes, but finally she said, "No. I guess I better not." ♦

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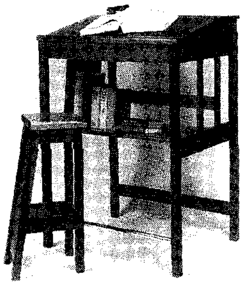
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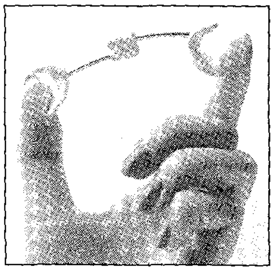
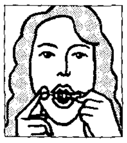
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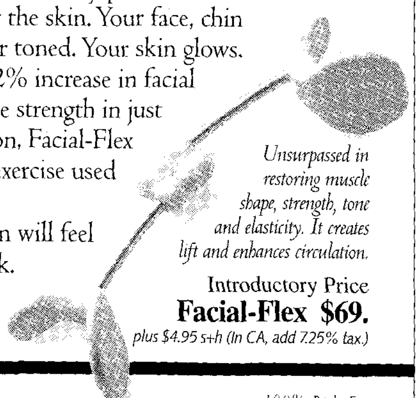
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SHOUTS & MURMURS

ALL THAT GLITTER

BY IAN FRAZIER

Do you have a problem with glitter? I do. By glitter I mean, of course, the shiny particulate substance used by children in art projects. It is viral. It gets onto surfaces and into niches in your house or apartment, and then it is pretty much there to stay. If you have young kids, chances are there is a piece of glitter within sight of where you are sitting now. And if it turns out the little shiny thing you thought was a piece of glitter was just an illusion, that only strengthens my point: glitter is extra-pernicious because when you know you have it you see it even in places it isn't. Just to be sure this glitter problem wasn't only mine, I asked around among some people I know:

Elizabeth W., Brooklyn: My son Colin constantly had glitter on his head for the first eighteen months of his life. All second children have a problem with glitter. I now discourage my older son from projects involving glitter. We have a sort of glitter moratorium at our house.

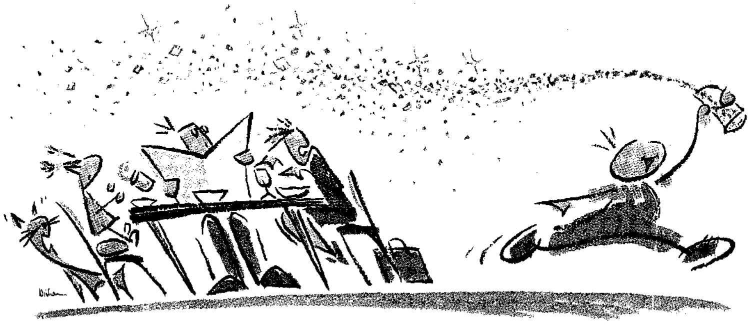
Maggie H., Brooklyn: I see it shining on the children's scalps through their hair. Eyelids are a favorite glitter nesting ground. To scrape it off, you practically have to draw blood. I come home sometimes and look in the mirror and find it on me. I think there should be a greeting card that says, "Sorry I had lunch with you with glitter on my nose."

John H., Queens: We have had glitter parties that were something to behold. Our loft has uneven floorboards, and at night the lines between the boards are a vista of glitter highlights. In our loft it blows into glitter drifts and glitter dunes.

Anne Q., Cambridge, Mass.: Andrew likes to roll toothbrushes on the floor, and all our toothbrushes have glitter on them. We often have glitter on our food.

Katherine F., Lincoln, Neb.: My God, did you get some on you when you were here? Not long ago, in the craft area in our basement, a can of mixed-color glitter fell on the floor, and one of the cats got in it and then she rolled around in the laundry, and soon afterward we began to notice that we were all glittering.

Amy L., San Francisco: We made a batch of fifty-two glitter valentines for my daughter to send on Valentine's Day, and later I felt so guilty thinking of all that glitter all over everybody's house in San Francisco. My husband Mike is a really, really orderly guy, and as he was Dustbusting it from between the cracks in the floor he looked up at me and said, "Never, ever do this again."



There's a piece of glitter on the carpet between my feet. From here, as I move my head, it flashes like a mirror signal from a distant ridge. Now I lie on the floor and look at it close up, through a photographer's loupe. The carpet strands are a glossy thicket, with the piece of glitter among the branches in the understory. Magnified, it is a coppery gold of uneven sheen. Using a pin and my fingernail, I put it on a page of this magazine. It fills almost exactly the space inside an "n." Seen through the loupe against the flat white of the page, it is a rectangle with a shallow right-angled notch in one corner, which causes it to sort of resemble the profile of Utah. On the arm of my chair is another piece of gold glitter, and I place it on the page, next to the first. Through the loupe, the two are identical, down to the notch in the corner. Elsewhere, I find more glitter, silver-colored, not uniform in size, but each piece a precise rectangle. I call a glitter manufacturer and talk to a vice-president named Marty. He tells me that glitter is made from rolls of very thin acetate by loud, custom-built glitter-grinding machines. His machines make about a ton of glitter every week.

Ever since the highway department began adding crushed-up bottles to its asphalt mix, certain New York City streets have glittered. Many city curbs and sidewalks glitter with shattered car window that escapes the street-sweeper or works its way into the spaces between paving stones. The worn lawns of the park by my house glitter in spots with discarded tiny metal stuff like pop-tops and bottle caps ignored by cleanup crews after bigger prey. In summer, especially in the city, you are surrounded by countless winking shards of light. Just now, my sister-in-law brought over her new baby daughter. I had never seen the baby before, and the baby had never seen New York. Her wide, dark eyes did not seem to blink as she moved them with a series of short adjustments from one new apparition to the next. She is a first child, cared for with the precision parents often give to their first. I looked her over carefully but could find no glitter at all. Before long, a piece will adhere to her, marking her as our own. ♦

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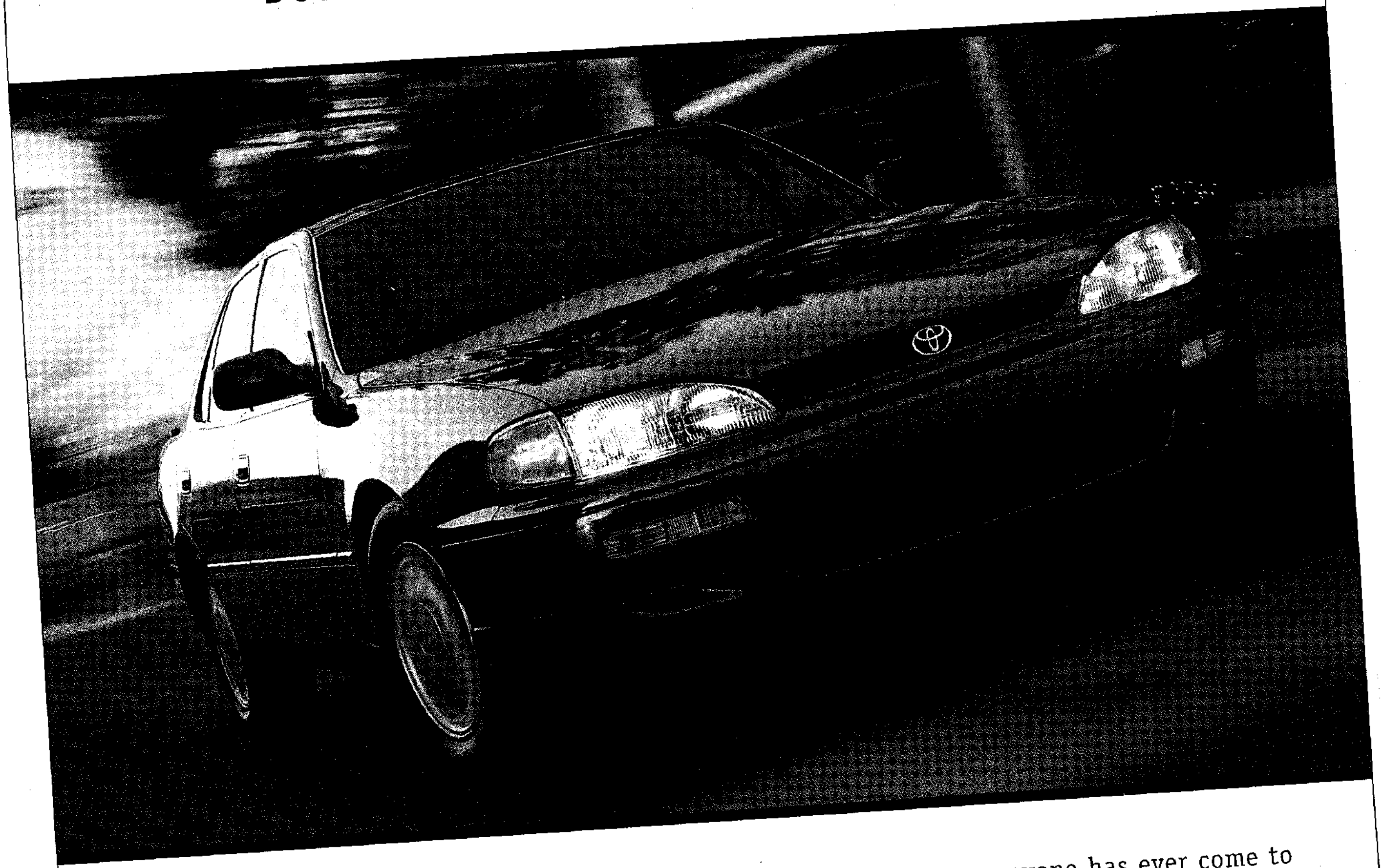

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